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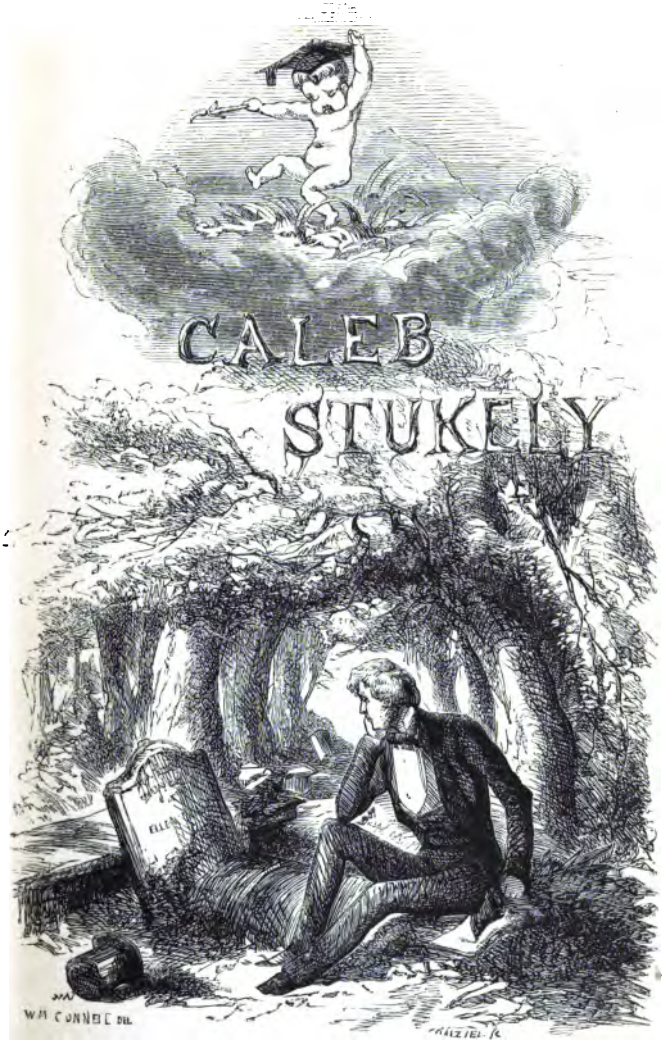

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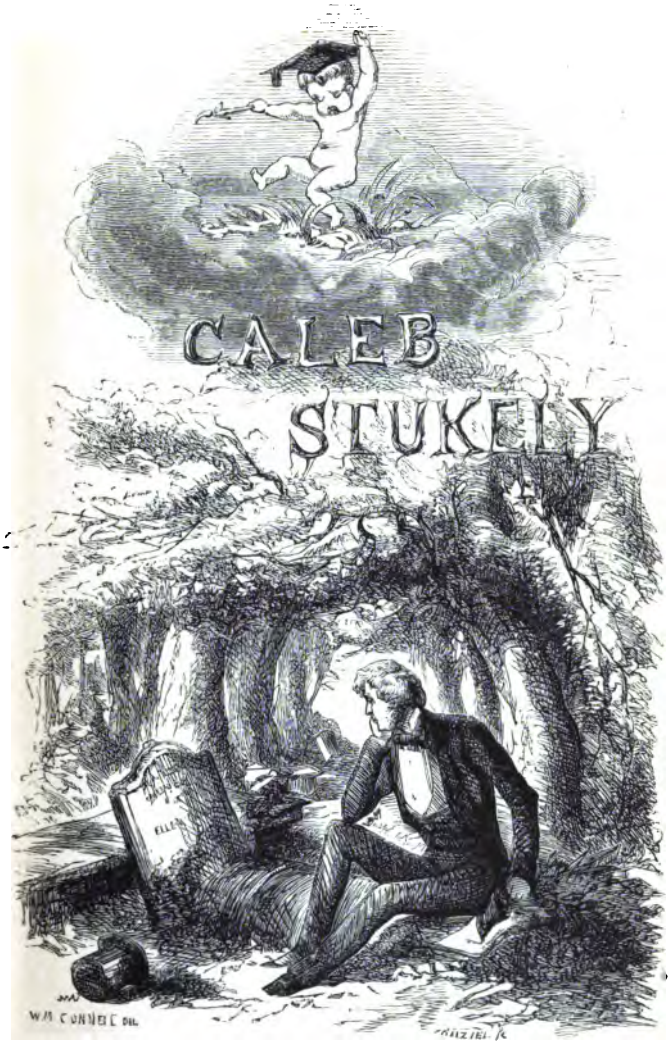

THE GRAVE OF ELLEN FAIRMAN.

Samuel Phillips

CALEB STUKELY.

LONDON:
NATHANIEL COOKE, MILFORD HOUSE, STRAND.
1854.

Samuel Phillips

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PREFACE.

THIRTEEN years have elapsed since CALEB STUKELY made its appearance in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*. In the present edition of the work, the tale has been relieved of many passages, which, without assisting the progress of the story, added to its bulk, and took from its interest. It is hoped that the approval accorded by the public, in 1841, to the first literary effort of the author, will not suffer by the curtailments which have been suggested by the voice of experience.

LONDON, FEBRUARY, 1854.

CALEB STUKELY.

PART I.

HOME.

The voices of my home! I hear them still
They have been with me through the dreamy night—
The blessed household voices, wont to fill
My heart's clear depths with unalloy'd delight!
I hear them still unchanged.

Mrs. Hemans.

I WAS born on the 7th day of July, and in the year 1777. My father carried on a respectable business in the city of London, and was reputed, by all who knew him, a worthy tradesman and well to do in life. He had married young, and of seven children that had blessed their union, when he had reached the age of sixty, and my mother that of fifty-eight, I only remained to cheer and enliven the sunset of their days. My parents were both seriously disposed, and they lived in perfect simplicity and peace. There was an air of stillness and repose about them and their proceedings, and a calm atmosphere flowed throughout their habitation, forming, in truth, a strong and happy contrast to the scene of business, activity, and tumult, beyond it. The recollections of this house, situated as it was in the very heart of the great city, with its regular, precise, but by no means unsocial or cold-hearted inhabitants, are at this moment vivid and fresh. It seems scarcely a year; although, alas! too many have elapsed since the day that I quitted the happy roof beneath which I drew my first breath, and heard for the last time the accents of a fond mother bidding me adieu. They murmur still in my ear, like the melancholy and hollow gushings of the sea-shell, bringing to my view the shadows of times and feelings that are entombed in the irrevocable past. I left my home on this occasion to take up my abode in Cambridge, at which university I had entered a few months previously. From my earliest boyhood, I had expressed a desire to be educated for the church; and my father, by every means in his power, encouraged, because he contemplated with delight the growing inclination of his last remaining hope. I was between seventeen and eighteen years of age. Five years had passed under the eye

of a clergyman, who, having himself gone out "high in honours," spent his time in preparing a select number of young gentlemen for the same distinction. I now "went up," as it is called, with a fair prospect of realising, in a measure, the sanguine expectations that the indulgent parent so naturally, but, as the result every day proves, too eagerly, entertains of his offspring, when he leaves his home, and enters for the first time upon the pursuits of men—whether it be in the academy or in the arena of busier life. Long is the list of fathers who have experienced the bitter pangs of disappointment and of shame; and how many a youth, fortified with the strongest resolutions, and protected by the warmest sensibilities, has been doomed to behold both, by a process and a transition almost imperceptible in their workings, dwindling away and utterly disappearing before the contaminating influence of evil example! On the evening prior to my departure, my father quitted his counting-house at an earlier hour than usual; and I, whilst still busy in arrangements for my removal, was summoned to his presence. My mother and he were seated in their cool and quiet parlour; and the former, although she appeared, to the exclusion of everything else, wholly engrossed in the duties of the tea-table, bore upon her mild and benignant countenance the marks of recent sorrow and of present trouble. We all three sat down, and in silence partook of that meal which is sanctified by an association with our best affections.

For the first time in my life my meal was a troubled one—there was a weight about my heart, and I could not eat. Oh, how I loved my home that happy evening, and how the thought of leaving it oppressed and sickened me!

Contrary to my expectation, my father spoke little to me: he had evidently intended to say much; but the uneasiness of my mother prevented him, and his own heart was full. I saw this in his every movement—his hand shook, and his eye filled more than once with involuntary tears. I felt a momentary relief when at length he pressed my hand, and wished me good-night. I did not answer him—I could not for worlds. A sickening pain at my throat overpowered me. My heart was bursting when I reached my room, and threw myself on my bed, my own dear bed—in which I had slept from infancy, and on which perhaps I might never sleep again. Exquisitely delicious were the tears that came to my relief—I cried, until repose came, and a glow of comfort such as passionate tears will bring at last.

The prayers that I offered up that night to the throne of goodness and of grace were fervent, and, it may be, extravagantly expressed—but I deemed, and felt them, to be honest. I was at that time innocent of the lesson that was taught to me with some pains at a later period of my life; when the Serpent, amongst other secrets, whispered into my ear the miserable intelligence, that *passion* is not always truth, and that the signs and symbols of sensibility may be nothing loftier than false and hypocritically contrived inventions. With what intensity did I implore blessings for my dear father and mother! What vows of obedience, duty, and abiding love, did I not then make! Again and again did I invoke my Maker to protect and support the beloved authors of my existence through all the trials and dangers of this life—to spare them yet for a short period, until I might return to them a hundred-fold the many acts of kindness, the thousand evidences of the tenderest affection, that I had received at their hands. With resolutions firm, I believed, and immovable as the eternal hills, I at length closed my eyes.

The morning came—a lovely one. The city itself looks fresh and happy

when the sun smiles upon it, and lights up its narrow streets. The spirits of the passengers are buoyant, too, in spite of the heavy burden of care which they doom themselves to carry. I have often remarked on a May morning, when light and warmth are on the ground, and fresh breezes purify the air, the springy step and the erect gait of men who have forgotten for an hour that they are bondmen, whilst their eyes glance to the stripe of blue heaven above them, and they tread the ground with the almost-forgotten elasticity of youth. The effect of this spirit-stirring morning reached also me. I forgot my sadness; I longed to be on the spot to which I was hastening, and to commence those operations which were delightful to me; chiefly in respect of the joy they would bring to the aged hearts of my dear parents. True, a tear started now and then into my eye, but it was one of pleasure and of glowing affection, and it sanctified the many and virtuous resolves which, one after another, were silently registered in my bosom.

It was past eight o'clock—at nine, the Cambridge *Intelligence* left the inn, which was distant about a mile from our dwelling. My father called me to him. "Caleb," he said, "your time with us is nearly expired—here is a letter for you, which you may read at your leisure. Take care of yourself, and may God send you back in health and safety! You will write to us often."

As he spoke, my mother entered the counting-house in which we were, and she looked as if she had slept but little. My father changed his tone, and called briskly to his clerk, with whom, for some time, he held a conversation on matters connected with his business. In the presence of my mother, he would scarcely make any reference to me or my proceedings. The clock struck half-past eight—"Now, lad," he exclaimed, hastening from the room, "kiss your mother, and let us begone." I turned to take leave of her whom I had never left before—my mother, whom I loved so well. But ah! I could not—I kissed her, and I sobbed on her bosom, and she pressed me to hers, and cried bitterly.

"Good boy, good boy!" she said through her tears—"Heaven protect you, my dear and only child!"

I dragged myself from her.

"Stay, Caleb," she cried out, "I had almost forgotten. Take this," and she gave me a pocket-book. Good-bye, now. May God bless you for ever, my darling child!"

My father, and a man carrying my trunk, had already departed. I followed and overtook them. Instinctively I turned my head and looked back upon our dwelling. My mother was at the door, she observed my movement, and beckoned me a last farewell.

I turned the street, and lost sight of her for ever.

The inn from which I was to set out was full of life and bustle. The heavy coach already stood before the inn yard. The driver was receiving his last directions in the house, and men were busy in the disposal and securing of the passengers' luggage. My spirits again failed me. The activity there, the sunshine, and the happy looks of men, contrasted with the low and oppressive feeling that came over me, but could not remove it. My father remained at my side, silent and moody. My hand was held in his, which trembled exceedingly.

"Is there anything you wish to say, father?" I inquired. "We shall soon start now."

"Yes," he replied; "come hither." He took me through the yard, at the end of which an obscure passage led to a set of stables. He stopped in the middle of it, and, looking about, as if to be assured of privacy, he

pressed his manly lips to my cheeks, and kissed me, in all the passionate expression of his unselfish fatherly affection. "May God Almighty bless you, my dear Caleb, and keep you pure! He knows how much I love you." As he spoke, he wept like a child. We returned silently down the yard. The ostler ran to us.

"Are you the other inside, sir? Coach is waiting." I nodded yes. The man called to the coachman, who had already taken his seat. I entered the lumbering vehicle, and as we quitted the inn, with as brisk a flourish as the driver could command, I observed my honoured parent turning, with a slow and mournful gait, once more his steps towards home.

It was some time before I could rouse myself from the extreme despondency into which the circumstances of the morning had subdued me. My head hung languidly down, and my eye wandered over the straw that was strewed at the bottom of the coach, and which served as a carpet for the travellers' feet, until it became familiar with every wisp. My mind occupied itself with the bed-side scene of the preceding night, the happiness of my early days, and the prospect that was opening before me. I dreamt of many things; whilst, in and above everything, sprung up visions of home, and of the beloved couple who presided over its placid doings. In every dazzling plan that imagination reared of the future, the two objects of my entire and ineffable love held the chiefest place, and were the brightest parts.

The country on every side, at the period I speak of, was nearer to London by some miles than it is now. When I roused myself from my reverie, we had reached the green fields and thick hedges, the waving trees and the blessed open sky; and Nature, in her unspeakable loveliness and simplicity, shed, as is her wont, an unseen healing power over my troubled spirits. The weight became lighter on my heart, and my thoughts gradually assumed a more cheerful tone. I took the letter from my pocket which my father, when he quitted the house, had placed in my hand. I now opened it, and read as follows:—

"My dearest boy,

"If I have said little to you on the subject of your present removal from us, it is not that I have thought lightly of it, or that I have not felt as your father concerning you. With my parting blessing, receive these my parting words. You have a tender mother, Caleb. Rebecca loved not her Jacob better than she does you—her youngest-born. You do not know, indeed, how much you owe her. She has nursed and cared for you with an untiring spirit. Before you could understand the obligations and duties of a child, she had accomplished for you more than a life of love and obedience can repay. You were a delicate and sickly infant, and but for the ceaseless watchings which seemed never too long for the motherly heart, you would not be alive this day to hear how much you are her debtor. In boyhood, your violent and passionate temperament, which threatened not only your own happiness, but that of all who loved you, was checked and corrected, and, I confidently trust, eventually expelled, by her enduring patience and self-denial. As you have grown, who but she has been about you, like a guardian angel, rendering joyous and almost sanctifying the hours of your life? You should be moved by such affection, as I am sure you will be: yet remember, Caleb, you are still young, and emotion is natural; and because it is natural, there is danger lest it may pass away with the occasion, and be forgotten. But I look for better things from you. I have described your mother, and the claim she has upon you. You have now left her, and be sure if you bring sorrow upon her aged head, there will be a deep and lasting retribution.

"I confide in you, my child, to the uttermost; still, whilst I concede to you a more extensive knowledge of books than your unlettered parent, I have the experience of years and the knowledge of men, which you must yet obtain. The world into which you are entering is full of temptation, and abounds with danger. Be firm, and you travel on unhurt. Yield to the first, although the smallest and scarce-audible whisperings of evil passion, and you are in the hands of the Wicked One. A university is a commonwealth, where many vicious as well as many honourable spirits are collected. It is the nature of the fallen, to seek out greedily the yet pure, and to endeavour, by every means, to drag them down from the bright eminence which they themselves have lost for ever. Their lips are honeyed, and their words sweet poison. They are most insidious in their temptings, but, if you love life, and would enjoy it, avoid them, though they come with all the power and fascination of the serpent. All that is left me now is to recommend you to the care of Him who has provided for us hitherto, and to the guidance of the good principle He has implanted in your bosom. You may rely, without fear of disappointment, upon the judgment of your own good conscience, and, so long as you live, upon the affectionate regard of your loving parent."

I had read this epistle for the fifth or sixth time, when I was disturbed by what sounded to me like a suppressed laugh, and a voice exclaiming, just sufficiently loud for me to hear it, the single monosyllable—"Fresh."

I raised my eyes from the letter, and became conscious of the presence of other individuals. Imagining for an instant that every emotion I experienced, and every thought that ran through my brain, had been manifest to strangers, I blushed deeply; but I recovered myself quickly, and began to observe more particularly the countenances of my companions. Which of them it was that spoke and laughed, I could not decide; for the eyes of all were at the instant turned from me, and there was neither smile, nor expression of any other kind, in the faces of any that might lead to detection.

Our coach contained six inside passengers. The seat opposite my own was occupied by two young men, and a man somewhat advanced in years. The former possessed a gentlemanly air, and were apparently well-bred. I determined at once that they were bound for the same place and employment as myself. They were both dressed with remarkable neatness, and had altogether that comfortable and easy manner, which indicates, in most instances, the enjoyment of good circumstances, if not of actual independence. Their looks were exceedingly grave; but the solemnity of one, at least, seemed false, and to exist rather in spite of his nature than as the proper exponent of it. There was a frowning eyebrow, but, at the same time, a small and laughing eye, sparkling with joyousness that no effort could conceal; and although a demure and pursy turn was forced upon the lip, it had to struggle for the mastery with a sly upward curl, by which it was not difficult to perceive it must eventually be repulsed and overcome. These observations apply to the younger of the two travellers, between whom there subsisted a marked resemblance. He might have been about nineteen years of age, and a year or two the junior of his companion. As I continued my observation I could not but suspect that to him were to be traced the previous laugh and exclamation; and I suffered a pang of boyish uneasiness, as I concluded that I had been the cause and subject of them. He was handsome, and his face beamed with confidence and delight. In spite of his assumed seriousness, I pronounced at a glance, that good-nature and he were by no means strangers to one another.

The elderly gentleman, who sat next to them in the corner, was a very different order of being. He looked about fifty years of age, but he might have been some years older or younger. He had that peculiar mien which makes it a puzzle to fix the precise age of an individual. There was a glaring discrepancy between the glossy and black curly hair which ornamented his head, and the deep furrows and expressive lines that time or trouble had ploughed along his cheek. Again, the vivacity and fire of an eye which moved with the quickness and sharpness of youth, seemed hardly to belong to the dull and heavy-lipped mouth, that, hanging down, discovered almost toothless gums, and denoted either supreme stolidity or the giving way of years.

If it were a task to discover this good man's age, it was not a whit easier to give him a position in society. He did not belong evidently to that which is popularly called the *lower* order, and he was scarcely respectable or clean enough to be ranked in the *middle* class. Had there been a mean between the two he would have settled there; but, in the absence of this, he represented the extremes of both. You might note in him, as it were, the last degree of the one class, and the first of the other. His whole person was characterised by dirtiness. His face, hands, (he wore no gloves,) clothes, and boots—all were dirty. His clothes were made, perhaps, from the best wool, and had the neatest workmanship, and if brushed, and fitted to a body to which cleanliness was an article not of the least consideration in life, might have challenged comparison with the choicest. The hand, too, relieved of its filthy covering, would not have disgraced a lady—for it was small and well-shapen. The complexion of this curious person was a dark brown, and looked the browner by reason of his universal fault. To conclude this short sketch of him, I must add that his hair, to which I have already referred, was heightened in its beauty by an exuberant plenty of strongly-scented oil, his dirty shirt was decorated with a massive brooch, his nose was large and Roman, and all his features were strongly stamped with that peculiar expression, which is recognised over the whole world under the name of—Jewish. By way of postscript (for I discovered this afterwards), let me say that his height was five feet six or thereabouts, and he was of a slender make.

The remaining two travellers, they who shared my seat, were a mother and daughter travelling to Lynn, in Norfolk. I need not refer to them further. We said little as we journeyed, and parted company at Cambridge. I have never seen them since. The old lady must have long since mouldered in the grave; and the blooming lass, who looked so bashful and so coy, who could not choose but blush and bend her head beneath the over-zealous gaze of that tall handsome youth—is she yet living? Has she grown grey—the blossom brushed from off her cheek? Age will not spare it; and the smooth soft skin, so very smooth was hers, is it pinched up and withered? Does her eye lack lustre now, and is it turned as mine is—back upon the past? Pray God the retrospect is fair, and yields a balm to soothe the swift descent—a joy that is at once a promise and an earnest of the future.

The Israelitish gentleman soon became an active agent in the dismissal of certain large pieces of dry bread, which he brought from his pocket, one after another, and ate with amazing rapidity. He remained silent the while; but as he munched, and dropped the crumbs upon his neighbour's knee, he drew his breath deeply through his nose, which again discharged it in a disagreeable sound, something between sniffing and snoring. The younger of the two young men at length interfered.

"You are a queer brick, Levy," he said, in a tone that predicated acquaintance; "but I advise you to have your breakfast next time at home, and what you can't eat give to the birds. I'm not hungry."

"Mishter Temples," answered the person addressed, gulping down a mouthful, "you are sich a funny gentlemansh; you alvays makes your vits vit poor Levy. I tink if Levy was dead you vouldn't know vat to do vit yourself."

This was spoken with so curious a twang, and with so deferential an air, that I could not help smiling, which observing, the young gentleman turned to me, and, with a polite movement, thus accosted me:—"You are, I presume, going to college, and should by all means know Mr. Solomon Levy." The latter gentleman assumed a gesture of extreme modesty. "He is as necessary to you as your cap and gown, and in every respect as useful. The mellowest grape of Portugal, and the mildest tobacco-leaf of America, are found with him; and tin, when times are hard, and governors have bled their last, as plentiful as in the sea-bound *Cassiterides*."

The elderly gentleman did not seem to understand altogether the point and meaning of this speech, nor in truth did I; but, unwilling to acknowledge my ignorance, I allowed the young student to proceed.

"I will not say that my friend Levy, like the Prince of Denmark, is 'the glass of fashion and the mould of form.' No, that were flattery. But he hath daughters, passing fair, maids of Judah, whose bright eyes put out all lesser orbs of light. I've seen them at the county-ball, as Chaucer says—'the silver drops all hanging on the *Lev—es*.' But they were paste, as I've often said before."

"Rale shtones," interrupted Mr. Levy eagerly. "Rale shtones, as I hoped to be shaved!"

"Well, no matter, this gentleman may indeed consider it a lucky day that brings him into this society. Sir, you must allow me to have the honour of the introduction. Mr. Levy, Mr.——?"

"Stukely."

"Mr. Levy, Mr. Stukely."

I bowed to the dirty gentleman, and he in return smiled rather grimly upon me, and winked his eye in token of admitted friendship.

"Ah," pursued the collegian, "these introductions are the bane of good fellowship, and the very ruin of Cambridge. You might have spent a life in the place, and yet for want of a common friend have been ignorant of each other's existence. Had you made advances, indeed, Levy must have repelled you; for where custom becomes inveterate, it robs men of their own will, and reduces them to the level of slaves."

"And yet, James," said his brother, who now made himself heard for the first time, "how necessary to a well-constituted society is this social arrangement! What a protection does it afford to the retiring and meek from the intrusion of the officious! How else should the innocent and unwary be sheltered from the worldling and the sharper?"

"True, O king!" replied the common friend; "and therefore, lest Mr. Stukely may form a hasty and incorrect judgment of your character, let me at once introduce to his notice my worthy elder brother, Mr. William Temple.—Mr. Stukely, Mr. William Temple."

Mr. William Temple grasped my hand, and assured me that, having legally acquired the pleasure of my acquaintance, he should have no objection in becoming exceedingly intimate.

"Do you go," inquired Mr. James, "to a large college?"

"I have entered at Trinity," was my reply.

"Ah, low—shocking low; Trinity is going down very fast. The market is overstocked, as they say in the city. They have sent out a good man or two, who, I should guess, have bitten all the *paters* in existence; for they have been mad about Trinity ever since. No, that won't do at all. You must migrate to Sidney—that's the college! Nobody goes there. Select and gentlemanly. Nothing snobbish. Men are friends and brothers—quite a little family."

"Surely, James," interposed Mr. William again, "Mr. Stukely's friends have well considered the propriety of their step, and have weighed all things in the balance. There are both advantages and disadvantages, and reasons both positive and negative."

"Now don't—there's a good fellow," said his brother, in a tone of supplication. "You must know, Mr. Stukely, that they call my brother at home old *plus* and *minus*. To be sure, he is no end of a mathematician. He was three months dragging over the *pons asinorum*, since which feat he has become so close a reasoner, that there is nothing which was previously right that he cannot prove now to be decidedly wrong. By the way, are you for classics or mathematics?"

"My own wishes," I replied, "would lead me to classics; but my father——"

"Your what?" asked Mr. James.

"My father, sir."

"What's that?"

"Why, my father, sir," I repeated, somewhat puzzled.

"Ah! I see now, I had forgotten. You mean the some time *governor*, the now *relieving officer*. You speak the London dialect. We get more Doric as we proceed. The word father is less understood now every stage we travel. When we arrive at Trumpington, the word's obsolete. Curious fact that?"

"Remarkable, indeed!" I added. "I was not aware that, so near to the metropolis, so emphatic a change obtained in our language."

"I dare say not," rejoined my new acquaintance. "What do you think of the name for a man in a long blue cloak and brass buttons being *bull-dog*, and *no-end-of-a-brick* being a correct translation of a hard-reading man?"

"Strange! and upon what theory or law of language is it supposed that such changes depend?" I inquired, and, as I have since thought, somewhat conceitedly.

"Ah, there you stagger me!" replied Mr. James. "If you want the theory, apply next door. Now, William, I am sure you must know. What's the theory?"

"Why," said the gentleman thus appealed to, rising in his seat as if he were afraid of shaking the vast amount of thought that he carried in his brain, "it is said—but I think I can show that the whole of the argument is not susceptible of proof—that although there are remains of the ancient Saxon language to be found in London, as elsewhere in England, yet the pure first-hand and only superfine Saxon is to be found in perfection in Cambridge. So far I agree with the proposition. But to account for this it is argued, that after the battle of Hastings, Harold, the son of Godwin, and the opponent of the Conqueror, escaped with his life, and sought refuge at the university, where he delivered lectures on the native language and literature, became proctor, and eventually vice-chancellor; and that the genuine vernacular has descended to us, in consequence of his own particular dying request, that no alteration or admixture should ever be allowed by the public orator, or any other officer of the university for

the time being. You see this statement involves two problems—1st, The existence of lectures at the time of the Conquest, and secondly, The existence of Harold as professor at the university. Now it is a self-evident truth—or, more properly speaking, an axiom—that the university did not exist until some centuries after the death of Harold; therefore there was no university at the time of the battle of Hastings. Much less were there any professorship established, and a lectureship on the native language and literature is equal to a professorship; therefore there were no lectures at the time of the Conquest. Again, Harold, it is said, was professor at the university; but it has been proved that there was no university, and, *à fortiori*, no professorships. But Harold *was* professor, which is absurd; therefore, Harold was not a professor at the university—*Quod erat demonstrandum.*"

At the conclusion of this speech, the mathematician looked at me earnestly for a moment, and then, by slow degrees, resumed his original state of reservedness—his arms folded, and his head falling languidly on his chest. Mr. Levy looked obliquely at him, then triumphantly at me, and treading on my toe at the same time, seemed to inquire what might be my opinion of Mr. William Temple—*now*.

My respect and admiration were certainly increased for a man who could thus bring to bear upon the most familiar topics the formula of science, and who evidently did not hesitate to reject the simplest truth until it had undergone the severe scrutiny of his very exact mind. The allusion which his brother had made to the fifth proposition of Euclid, I regarded as a mere figure of speech, such as I knew to be often employed in the best possible humour against great minds. The airy disposition of Mr. James imperceptibly won upon me. I looked upon him as one to whom knowledge came unsought, and of its own free-will, whose head had become a storehouse of intellectual acquirements without labour or exertion—a genius, in fact: that species of humanity which I had often heard of, but had never met face to face until now. Thus was there also a portion of reverence mingled with the familiar delight with which I listened to the frank and friendly communication of Mr. James. Even Mr. Levy, looked up to as he was by the young scholar, acquired a rapidly growing importance, for which I must acknowledge his language, his vulgar looks, and his dirty appearance, could not offer any legitimate or corresponding title. Amused and interested by all my companions, the journey was anything but tedious or wearisome; and before we reached that point in our progress at which we halted for refreshment, my animal spirits, which had congealed during the first hours of the morning, relaxed and grew warm beneath the sunny influences which had so unexpectedly sprung up.

The five inside passengers entered the inn at which we stopped—Mr. Temple, junior, promising himself to have no mercy on the various dishes which were awaiting the honour of his arrival. Naturally backward and timid, I was, on this particular occasion, not very desirous to join the party. I could feel perfectly at home with them so long as we were confined to the coach; but the very instant we were loosed into the world again, my constitutional bashfulness at once restored our previous relation. The inn had a picturesque situation. On one side of it flowed a transparent stream, and to the other was attached a spacious orchard, on whose smooth sward there stood the finest trees I had ever beheld. To this spot I directed my steps. Born and bred in London, without having passed two weeks together beyond its dusty precincts—albeit it was not the huge world of smoke it has since grown to be—I was, at this period, unacquainted with the simplest flowers of the field. I knew of Nature nothing but

her loveliness, and the glimpses I had caught had made me sensible of her dominion. Separated from the orchard by a sunken fence, a slowly-rising meadow spread itself for a considerable distance; and beyond it, as far as the eye could reach, were rich surfaces of cultivation—the yellow corn standing prominently forward, like patches of "stationary sunshine." In the full possession of health, vigorous and young, I warmed with ecstasy as I gazed upon this scene—common and every-day as it was—and thanked God who had supplied me with a capacity of enjoyment, without a single sorrow to embitter or detract from it. I seated myself beneath the foliage of a chestnut-tree. I had not yet opened the pocket-book which my mother had placed in my hands. I did so now. A few affectionate words had been hastily written on the first page, and mention was also made of a bank-note for fifty pounds which she had placed in one of the pockets for my private use, "in addition to the sum which my father would allow me for my general expenses."

Not for any length of time had I enjoyed the sweet communion of my thoughts, when I was startled from my situation by a voice calling my name. I could not mistake the accent. I raised myself from the ground, and beheld Mr. Levy approaching the tree with rapid strides. When he found I observed him, he walked more slowly.

"Mishter Shtukely," he began, "they are all eating away there as if they were shtarved. If you are fond of cold fowl, upon my vord you haven't a minute to shpare. That young Mishter Temples hasn't said a syllable to nobody since he began, and is biting away as hard as ever. He has a most uncommon appetite!"

"Thank you, Mr. Levy. I am not disposed to eat; but I am grateful, nevertheless, for your friendly hint."

"Oh, don't say a vord about that!" he replied; "vy shouldn't I be civil? It doesn't cost me nothing. In going through the vorld, Mr. Shtukely, you may always tell the good man from the bad man by that 'ere. The good man is ready to do anything for another, ven it costs him nothing; but the bad man is always for himself, and vouldn't so much as go over the vay for his own father."

I once more thanked Mr. Levy for his civility, and begged that he would not on my account keep from his friends or his unfinished dinner.

"You are very good, sir," said the gentleman, "but my religions don't allow me to eat that sort of victuals, and I am very particular. You see ve're a clean people, and are forbid to eat of the unclean animals, and the nasty mixtures that the Christians—though I don't vish to be rude—make vith their fat and their butter and their meat, and all them kind of nonsense. Now you vont be angry vith me, if I tell you something—vill you? Vell then, do you know, the very moment I saw you, you vun my heart—you look so good and innoshent. But you must take care of yourself, my dear boy—excuse my being free:—you must indeed. This is such a vicked vurld, and it ain't everybody that vill give you the benefit of his experience; 'cause you see, experience is something like shtock in trade or capital, and after thirty or forty years perhaps, that's all a man has left him to do business vith. I dare say you've got a father and a mother—eh?" I am not sure that Mr. Levy perceived any particular change in my countenance as he put this question to me; but without permitting me to answer, he continued—"Vell, never mind, don't tell me, don't harrow up. I know vot it is, my dear boy, to have a good father and mother; yes, and to leave them too, and to be turned into the vurld among strangers, as I vas at a tender age, vith nobody to take care of my morals

or teach me vat vas right, except the nature that vas born vith me. I dare say, my dear, you've got plenty of money to shpend—eh?——"

"My father, sir, is kind and liberal, and——"

"Vell now, don't tell me, I von't hear a vord. It's no business of mine. Only take care of it, my dear child, and don't shpend it like a *narr*.* You must excuse my freedom; but I tould you before, I'm quite taken vith you, and I feel like your father ven I speak to you. Ven you get to Cambridge, you must put your money into the hands of some shteady honesht person that knows vot the vurld is, and vill put you in the vay of laying it out to the best advantage. Vas you reading a book, my dear, ven I came up? Ah, vot a thing it is to be fond of reading! Sometimes, ven I sits at home, and thinks how vicked the vurld is, I think I should go vild if it vasn't for reading the newspapers, vith the lisht of bankrupts and all the polishe news."

Mr. Levy had touched a tender chord, and I answered him—"Yes, Mr. Levy, I was perusing a most affectionate letter from the fondest and best of mothers. Look here, sir!" I exclaimed warmly, drawing the book from my pocket, and moved even to tears; "this is her latest gift. Although she knew I had no need of it, and was amply supplied, with her own hand, and without my knowledge, she inclosed this note. You can understand and appreciate my tears."

"I vish I may die if I can't, and that's the long and the short of it," said Mr. Levy passionately. "Now, you look here, Mr. Shtukely, vat I shall do. There's three pounds of smuggled cigars that I had put by expressly for Mishter Temples. I charge 'em twenty shillings a-pound, and they're vorth forty if they're vorth a stiver. I'll break my vord vith him for vonce, if I never do another shtroke of business vith him, and that vould be as good as ruination to me. You shall have them every vone at the price. I never see sich a model of a good boy since I vas born, and it sha'n't go vithout its revard, or else Sol Levy vill know the reason vy."

Before I could remonstrate against so great a sacrifice of principle and property, we were both summoned from the orchard by a shrill cry proceeding from the volatile lungs of Mr. Temple, junior.

"Take care of yourself, Mr. Stukely," said that worthy, when we joined him; "take care of yourself. If you creep into holes and corners with Mr. Levy, it will soon go hard with your orthodoxy. He's a seductive character, and, before you are aware of it, he will turn you into one of the faithful."

"Mishter Temples," said the Israelite very seriously, "vith other people's religions I never bother my head. I've business enough upon my mind vithout troubling myself vith vat doesn't consarn me. Besides, it's very necessary that some should be this, and some the other. For my part, I should be very sorry to see that day ven everybody vill be Jews; for I think business vithout the Chrishtians vill be very flat and inshipid."

"Ah! Levy, you're a new light, and citizen of the world! But why have you deserted us, Mr. Stukely? Your appetite will quarrel with your breach of good manners before we reach Cambridge. Was our company so disagreeable that you should refuse to break bread with us?"

"I felt no inclination for food, and the lovely day tempted me to feast in the open air."

"Upon nothing! Ah, you cannot feed capons so! My dear fellow you are a freshman, and freshmen belong to the extensive family of *Green*. They are known by their small appetites and large feelings, by their love of home and bread and milk, and by their dislike of mixed society.

* *Anglice*—Fool.

Well, I suppose it must be so. Should we be fellow-travellers this time twelvemonth, your poetry will be sensibly diminished, and your appetite restored to you. I am wide awake to the whole proceeding, for, *autem ego*—what is that Latin proverb about Catiline? I have been so long at Cambridge that I've forgotten the little Latin I took up with me."

("Another figure of speech," thought I.)

"I shall be sorry," I replied, "to use the words of our friend here, to see that day, Mr. Temple, that will find me less under the direction of those feelings which at this moment attract and attach me to all that is lovely and consolatory in life."

"A very sensible idea, and very vell put together," remarked Mr. Levy.

"Levy, be quiet," said Mr. Temple softly. "Stukely, you are young, very young, not in years, but in facts. I have gone through all this, and so has many a better fellow. It's a stale game, though new to you. There are certain things which we must all undergo. We leave off sucking. Our mothers take pride in combing our hair straight. We are discharged from home, with many kisses and very many parting words. It's all beautiful, no doubt, and, as you observe, very consolatory—but it's only part of the system. Now, I never wager, except upon the odd trick at whist, and then only half-crowns; but I should like to bet heavy odds at this moment that I could read what's passing in your mind."

"Mr. Shtukely," exclaimed Mr. Levy, "don't you do any sich thing. That would be a very nice vay of getting rid of your money."

"How many times within this hour," continued Mr. Temple, "have you persuaded yourself that your home, wherever it may be, is the choicest place in life, and how many new attractions, which have escaped your observation so many years, have you all at once discovered there? Why do you blush? I know your home never looked so fair as it does this moment, reflected to you at this short distance through the medium of your passions. Don't deceive yourself; and, above all, beware of taking credit for something very peculiar, which is as common to all men as their meat and drink Pshaw! I have known fellows who have been so bullied and thrashed by their governors, that they have never risen from their daily prayers without putting up a special one for their release, actually stand crying and snivelling when the hour of deliverance came, swearing that they had never been half thrashed enough, or sufficiently grateful for what they had received. Things do look so different when we are about to lose or leave them, and men are such arrant humbugs to themselves."

When I entered the Cambridge *Intelligence*, for the second time, I could not understand why I felt so awkward, vexed, and uncomfortable, in the presence of young Mr. Temple. But the said gentleman had not yet done with me.

"Apropos, Mr. Stukely, to the subject we have just discussed." I changed colour as he spoke; for I dreaded an exposure, although I could not exactly define what the speaker had to reveal concerning me. "You must hear a capital story that I can tell you of one who for a season was a fellow of your own kidney. Poor Jack Husband! Do you remember him, Levy?"

Levy sighed deeply.

"Some kind relations, having of course his best interests at heart, introduced him to a large house in India, which soon introduced him to the yellow fever and six feet of earth. He came, in the first instance, from Jamaica. His father was a large planter, and Jack was sent over to learn manners, and the art of preaching to the niggers. For the first six months things went on remarkably well. He was all his mother could wish him. He wore clodhopper shoes, worsted stockings, a white choker,

and thick cotton gloves. He rose regularly to chapel, and went to bed every night punctually at nine o'clock, upon milk and water. He barricaded his rooms; and, because he had been told that the university was a hotbed of vice, he shut himself up like a seed in a cucumber frame. If a man by chance spoke to him, he buttoned his breeches pockets in order to prevent the fellow's walking into them: and he watched the movements of his bed-maker and gyp, as though to assassinate him had been the aim and business of their lives. It was a great pity that his mamma ever trusted so sweet a youth in so wicked a place—but it was a moral struggle, and you shall hear the result of it. Jack's remittances came at stipulated times from his father's correspondent in London, and at one period it happened that they hung fire most fearfully. He wrote at first very politely on the subject; but, receiving no reply, expressed his opinion in a peremptory and business-like manner. The second application proving just as effectual as the first, Mr. Husband became very ill. He spoke to his tutor, (who got as alarmed as himself,) procured an *ægrotat* and *exeat*, and walked into London, with the bowels of a man determined on mischief. The correspondent, *correspondens à non correspondendo*, hung out in Broad Street, City, and thither Mr. Husband first went The house was closed, and every window but one blocked up by a shutter. Jack thought of the ocean, the distance from home, and grew very wretched indeed. 'Is Mr. Wilson at home?' faltered Jack. 'Which?' said the maid who answered the knock. Jack, all alive to suspicion, looked hard at the girl, fancied collusion, and walked into the passage without further delay.

"'Now, young woman,' said he, shutting the door, 'take care of what you are about. I have come from quite as bad a place as London is, and I know the whole thing. You just tell Mr. Wilson, that Mr. John Husband has called to see him, and isn't inclined to depart without having that pleasure.' The servant ran away, and Jack walked into the parlour, and a very curious object indeed there met his eye. A young gentleman, about eighteen years of age, with a painted face, and a long curly wig, bedizened in a glaring red court dress, was lying at full length on the ground, a sword at his side, and apparently in the last agonies of death. 'Perdition catch thy arm,' he bawled out, as Jack opened the door—'the chance is thine!' Before Husband could recover from his surprise, the young fellow was on his legs, blushing scarlet through his crimson, and apologizing for the queerness of the situation. To make short of the story, this was no other than Mr. Wilson, junior, whose father being from home, and travelling in Scotland (which facts, by the way, accounted for the suspension of the supplies), he, the son, was perfecting himself in the rehearsal of a crack part which he was to act on the following night at an amateur club, of which he was the secretary, treasurer, and principal performer. What immediately passed between the two, I do not know. Jack did tell me that, after a bit, the young one ordered up rump-steaks, pickles, and bottled porter, and, about seven o'clock, proposed a visit to Drury-Lane Theatre, where Siddons and Kemble that night acted in Shakspeare's tragedy of Macbeth —that, at the conclusion of the performance, they adjourned to the Johnson's Head—and that, after that, about ten o'clock the next morning, he found himself in bed in a strange place, without the remotest idea of the means which had been taken to deposit him there. A day or two afterwards, the tutor received a letter, which informed him that Mr. Husband had been indefatigable in the pursuit of Mr. Wilson—but in vain, nor did he hope to discover him for some weeks to come—that Mr. Husband bitterly regretted any circumstance that separated him from his studies, but that he looked forward to returning to them with redoubled ardour, when

his object in London was fully accomplished. In about a month, Jack returned to Cambridge, in a very seedy condition. He looked pale and sewed up. Mr. Wilson, junior, accompanied him. He came to spend a week or two with his friend, and to recruit. Jack waited on the tutor, spun a long yarn about wandering barefooted over the Highlands of Scotland, paid the arrears, and was dismissed with tears, and an invitation to supper.

"London had certainly rubbed off a good deal of Husband's rust. He ceased to dress like a snob, and began to think like a gentleman. He sported his oak no longer, and he looked upon his fellow-mortals with a kindlier and more forgiving spirit; subscribing implicitly to the opinion, that man is by nature a sociable and communicative animal. I was at a wine party that he gave about two months after his return, and there I heard him deliver a very eloquent speech about prejudice, and antique notions, the scales having fallen from his eyes, and so forth. It is a curious fact, however, that after this eventful break in Husband's career, his remittances came very irregularly, and the necessity for his personal attendance in London exceedingly frequent. One morning he received a very important communication from his friend, Wilson. It explained to him that he might very shortly expect a visit from his governor; for he (Wilson) had extracted by stealth a letter from his own governor's pocket a day or two before, whilst he was dozing after dinner, and had therein read that Mr. Husband, senior, having occasion to make a voyage to England, had proposed to himself the delight of taking his son by surprise, and to behold him absorbed in the prosecution of his studies and mental improvement. There was a postscript which I recollect well. It ran thus:—'New Tragedy on Friday. Glorious John and Siddons, first-rate parts—pitch the remittances to Old Nosey. Come up.' Jack wishing, no doubt, to make some enquiries respecting his parent's visit, went to town immediately. The two friends greatly applauded the tragedy, and, as usual, when the curtain fell, adjourned to the Johnson's Head.

"Jack used to say that, without being able to account for it, he never in his life had felt so thoroughly complete as on this evening. A feeling of universal benevolence gradually crept over him, and he vowed emphatically to Wilson, 'that man is the very incarnation of all that is lovely and good.' Milk punch floors the human heart—and that's a fact.

"Young Wilson belonged to a debating society, and it was a point of honour with him to meet all general statements with particular contradiction.

"'We'll argue that, Jack,' says he; and scarcely had he so said, when a voice was heard in the passage. It spoke for a minute or two, and stopped.

"Jack started. Wilson looked about the room for a thunderbolt. When he turned again, Husband was under the table, pulling hard at his legs, and imploring him in a whisper to blow out the candles.

"'What's the matter?' cried Wilson.

"'Wilson, I am dished. I'm blessed if that isn't the governor.'

"'What, Jamaica?' asked Wilson.

"'Idem!' cried Jack.

"The candles were extinguished immediately. In a couple of hours, Husband was flying to Cambridge as fast as four horses could carry him.

"About ten o'clock next evening, a respectable old gent, at Trinity Gate, desired to be directed to the rooms of Mr. John Husband. That gentleman's gyp was by accident in the court at the time, and he begged the elderly gentleman to follow him.

"'I'm afraid, sir,' said the animal, 'unless you're a *very* particular friend I can't let you see Mr. Husband till four o'clock.'

"'What, to-morrow afternoon?' enquired the venerable stranger.

"'No, sir, four o'clock to-morrow morning.'

"'What do you mean? Does Mr. Husband receive visitors so early in the morning?'

"'Future Senior Wrangler, sir. Senior Wranglers never fag in the day-time, sir.—Day-time doesn't do for mathematics—too light and lively. Hope Mr. Husband won't break down. Afraid he will. Many men, sir, in my time, would have been senior wranglers, if they hadn't broke down. Mathematics very unwholesome, sir. Very weakening, and bad for the health. Senate-house large and cold. Men go in quite well—sit in a draught—feel very ill—seized with a shivering pain in the stomach—forget what they are about—walk out—nervous fevers—go home.

"'Poor John!'

"'Do you know Mr. Husband, sir?'

"'A little,' said the old man, with a great deal of feeling.

"'Only a little, sir? Ah! what a happy man his father must be! I'd give a trifle to have such a son. Too good—that's his only fault. Do you know his father, sir? A very respectable and intelligent old gentleman, I've heard.

"'Yes, my good man,' replied he of the white hair, 'I do know him a little. Here's a crown for you. Who could have told you that I was—that his father, I mean to say—was respectable and intelligent?'

"'The world will talk, sir,' said the vulture.

"'Ah, I forgot, so it will! Now, you step in to Mr. Husband, and say that a gentleman wishes to see him directly.'

"'Upon my word, sir, it's more than my place is worth. What's the time, sir?'

"The old gentleman struck his repeater.

"'About half-past ten.'

"'Half-past ten. Really, I don't know—he's just beginning the *Comic Sections*.' The old gentleman slipped another crown into the claws of the carnivora. 'Well, sir, I suppose I must risk it. What name shall I say?'

"'Oh!—say a friend from the west.'

"The visitor was admitted, but so intent upon his studies was Jack, that it was some time before he was aware of his presence. Upon the table before him were two globes, the terrestrial and the celestial, various mathematical instruments—many books piled up, principally folios and quartos, and several sheets of scribbling and scribbled paper. The student himself was dressed in an old morning gown, and over his head to his shoulders hung a wet towel, that most unaccountable yet effectual of all mathematical charms.

"As the books say, 'I cannot describe the meeting of Jack with his governor'—for it was the old nigger-driver, and no one else. Jack set the old man crying about his health, and, before he departed, blarneyed him out of a hundred-pound-note. When the old man left the room, the gyp, who had listened all the time at the door, jumped into it; and Jack, overjoyed at his sudden accession of property, without saying a word by way of introduction, seized all the folios and quartos, and, one after the other, aimed them deliberately at the head of his attendant. He, being on the most friendly footing with his master, returned the compliment; and then both burst into a loud fit of laughter, and wondered how old Ginger could be such a fool, and counted up how many more hundreds they would relieve

him of before they would let him go; and passed many other jokes, all very becoming and proper when you consider the relative state and condition of the parties concerned.

"As ill luck would have it, however, old Sugarcane had left his stick behind him, and, returning immediately for it, he was stopped at the door, by a loud talking within; but, naturally concluding that it was only Jack doing his mathematics aloud, for the sake of the treat he applied his parental ear to the keyhole, from which I believe it would never have dragged itself, if the two worthies, their remarks being over, and conversation closed, had not emerged from the room, and brought themselves at once beneath the gaze of the astounded eavesdropper."

"Poor, poor old man!" I cried, involuntarily interrupting the narrator.

"Well, he was almost broken-hearted. But he was more to blame than Jack. What could they expect from a fellow whom they had taken such pains to bring up a hypocrite?"

"What became of him?"

"Within a week of the blaze, Jack's debts were paid, and his name taken off the boards. Three months afterwards he was on his way to India, and in less than a twelvemonth the dust was shovelled over him. Now, what's your opinion of the gentleman?'

"Can you ask me? Oh, could——"

"Ah—well, I see, you needn't be violent. I don't agree with you."

The shadows of twilight came on. Before Mr. Temple had finished his narrative, sleep had taken possession of the travellers. The jaggy motion and the continuous rumbling of the vehicle, in a short quarter of an hour, had produced its customary effect upon those who had partaken of a hearty meal; and Mr. Levy, who had been once more at his dry bread, the crumbs of which now hung lazily about his lips, also overcome, snored, oblivious and happy, in the snug corner which he had first appropriated to himself—suddenly he gaped. Mr. James Temple caught the infection. He stretched his limbs, and sunk gradually to slumber. Greyer and greyer became the light of day, and more definite and plain grew the sounds of external life. The horses' hoofs sounded distinct and hollow, as they trampled the dry ground, and not less clear the smacking whip and friendly voice of their conductor, cheering them on to the close of a long and heavy stage. All else was silence. It was night when the rattling of stones announced our arrival at the town. I gently opened the coach window, and looked out, and oh! that glorious sight of buildings, rearing themselves one after another like giants in the transparent night. How stately did they look! How venerable in their quiet and religious age! It was a dream of poetry, to gaze upon the noble bulk of living stone, laden with the memories of years, standing so pensive and so calm beneath the bright and watching stars of heaven. Here and there I could perceive, now walking through some noiseless street, now issuing from an antique court or gateway, a solitory student, and then a small cluster, these laughing aloud and boisterous, but the former wrapt in meditation, or busy, it might be, with thoughts of kindred and of home. Proud was I, as I looked around, that it was mine to say, "I also have a share in this;" and when I connected with the sacred spot the mighty master-spirits that were gone, but whose names still rung and were revered throughout the world, how did my youthful bosom burn with ambition, and a desire for fame!

The coach stopped at Trinity gate. When I alighted, my companions were still asleep. I did not care to wake them. I requested my luggage might be sent from the inn, and without a look I hurried past the lodge.

THE UNEXPECTED RETURN.

My rooms were pointed out to me. The bedmaker had been informed of my coming, and a comfortable fire awaited me.

Reader! the extremes of things opposed, *they* differ—the parts adjacent blend. Would it were otherwise! We cannot trace the first faint lines of crime till we have left them far behind, and when "returning were as tedious as go o'er;" we glide through good to ill. Were it at once to leap into the *depths* of guilt, how many might be scared and saved! Beware, lest you listen with equanimity and delight to the lambent tongue of vice —most dangerous when most playful!

PART II.

COLLEGE.

> He that would win the race must guide his horse
> Obedient to the customs of the course,
> Else, though unequall'd to the goal he flies,
> A meaner than himself shall gain the prize.
>
> *Cowper.*

ALMOST before I was aware of my own existence in the town and university of Cambridge, it appeared that others had been possessed of the fact: for, upon leaving the narrow slip of lodging in which I had passed the night, (and which, certainly, might be styled the bedroom, inasmuch as there was just room enough for a bed in it, and nothing more,) and entering the sitting-room adjoining, I discovered upon the table, awaiting me, a letter in due form addressed to Caleb Stukely, Esq., Trinity College, Cambridge. The contents were as follows:—

"The Vice-chancellor presents his kind regards to Mr. Stukely, and trusts that Mr. Stukely, senior, as well as Mrs. Stukely, are in the enjoyment of the best possible health, as this leaves the Vice-chancellor at present; at the same time, the V. C. begs to request the favour of Mr. Stukely's company at breakfast this morning, trusting that no previous engagement will deprive him of the honour.

"N.B.—Mr. Stukely will please attend in full dress."

Flattered as I really felt by this invitation, I attributed it rather to the high character which my father enjoyed as a trader in the city of London, than to any personal desert, of which the Vice-chancellor must necessarily have been ignorant. Singularly vigilant, however, I could not but consider that system, by which the private condition and movements of the humblest of scholars were so immediately observed and communicated to the highest authorities. Could this be the usual mode of receiving the adopted in the affectionate bosom of *alma mater?* or was it an especial mark of attention extended to me—an exception from the general rule? Let my youth plead for the modesty that induced me to form the latter opinion. Not having yet donned my academic costume, I argued that it would be becoming in me to present myself in that particular dress which had been made in London expressly for evening parties; albeit, such mighty and fashionable doings had been foreign to the quiet abode from which I had migrated. By Mr. Simmonds I was directed to the Vice-chancellor's

abode. The reader will not have forgotten that very respectable character introduced by Mr. Temple, in his narrative at the close of the last chapter —to wit, the gyp of Mr. Husband. The above-mentioned Simmonds performed the like office for me; but let not the worthiest of his species be confounded with the vilest. Picture to yourself a body curved and bending beneath a load of years—a head blanched in the service of old time, not a hair but wearing the master's livery—an eye of settled stillness—a hand, bloodless and old indeed, active only in its tremblings, squeezed up and faded—a gait, to say it was a child's would be to libel nature, it was so weak and tottering. This was the *external* Simmonds. The invisible part of him was not younger or fresher in the hour that his Maker first breathed the breath of life in him. I experienced a feeling of shame when I engaged him.

"You are too old for work, man," said I to him.

"Not I, indeed, sir," was his reply; "I'm nearer to fourscore than seventy—that is true; but I'll warrant you a lad of eighteen is not more nimble. Look here, now." And he attempted to *run* across the room! The exhibition was melancholy indeed. "Besides," he continued, holding his sides, and catching his breath after the exertion, "I've a grandson—God bless him!—who takes all the labour off my hands. But I should die if I were to give it up altogether. Sixty years come next Shrovetide have I done duty here. Ah, sir, things are different now! Times are not as they have been!"

(I discovered, when I became a few years older, that no times *are ever* as they have been. It is a fault inherent in the nature of times. Mr. Simmonds had no particular complaint to make; his remark was general.)

"Perhaps, sir," said Mr. Simmonds, when I had agreed to hire him, "you would like to be shown over your room. Be good enough to follow me." I must here premise that my room was of moderate dimensions, and might be described as containing one very large fireplace, one very large cupboard, two very large window-sills, and two very small windows. Further, it was wainscoted, and in the ceiling the artificial black preponderated considerably over the natural white. Having observed all this before, and at a glance, I was certainly not prepared for the important air with which Mr. Simmonds proceeded to point out the various localities and ornaments of the place. He made first for the large cupboard.

"This," said he, opening it, "is your pantry and larder, your china closet, and the receptacle for your bellows, gridiron, tea-kettle, and little saucepan. This," he continued, having reached the window-seat, "is your wine-cellar."

"Indeed!" I exclaimed, not comprehending him.

"Your wine-cellar," he repeated, lifting up the top of the window-sill, which was hinged to the rest of the timber, and discovering a hollow case reaching to the floor, and filled with sawdust.

"And this," said he, performing the same ceremony at the fellow window-sill, "is your coal-cellar. The locks of all are, as you see, broken, and my first advice to you is, that you immediately get them repaired. It is a little guard, though not much to be sure—more's the pity!" Without enquiring further into the meaning of these dark hints, I changed the conversation to the subject of the Vice-chancellor. I desired, before my visit, to gather something of his character.

"Do you know anything of him?" I asked Simmonds. "Is he an agreeable gentleman?"

"Why, look you, Mr. Stukely," answered the gyp; "just as I am standing talking to you now, I stood talking to him fifty years ago come

next commencement. Do I know anything of him? That is good! Yes, I should say I do—a little. For about four years, between you and me, sir, I knew rather too much of him. He was a mortal wild one, and many a scrape he got me and himself into, and many a falsehood—more's the sorrow!—did he invent to get us out of it. But he had a mort of money, and, of course, could do what poorer men daren't. He's an altered man now."

Thus informed, I set out for the Vice-chancellor's residence. He was the master of a small college, situated in one of the principal streets of Cambridge. In my time, it was an old and picturesque building, and looked grave and comely; snugly protected as it was by its long brick wall and row of lofty poplar-trees. That wall and those poplar-trees have been since razed: the edifice has been plastered over, and stands with its immodest glare of pretension, a very whited sepulchre. I rang gently at the lodge gate, and modestly placed my card in the hand of the well-dressed domestic who opened it. He retired for a quarter of an hour, and then returned, desiring me to follow him up-stairs. During his absence, I had not failed to notice the painful silence that extended through the place. It was not the delicious quiet that I had experienced on the orchard-ground the day before. No, that was the silence of nature and of life, cheerful and exhilarating. This was oppressive—the cold and earthy stillness of the tomb. A cough echoed through the house again—once a door slammed, and there rung through the dwelling a long and hideous reverberation. We passed into a spacious and well-filled library, then through a noble room with polished oaken floors. This looked upon a beautiful and extensive lawn. Shadows of massive floating clouds skimmed the green surface as I softly trod the room, and deepened the sombreness that pervaded the scholastic habitation. Beyond was the drawing-room, an apartment of good dimensions, and literally crowded with costly furniture. Here the lackey stopped, and drawing to the fireplace a bulky chair, capacious enough for four, he begged me to be seated, and then took his leave.

As it seemed to be the fashion in this establishment to proceed with as little hurry and fatigue as possible, I had ample time afforded me to observe the various sumptuous articles by which I was surrounded; but my curiosity was particularly excited by a small curtain which hung at the further end of the room, evidently concealing something that was held too sacred for the vulgar eye. For some time I fought against my desire, but, unable at length to resist the temptation, I withdrew the curtain, and discovered, not what I had expected to find, the form and feature of some ladye-love, but a portrait by Vandyke, painted in all the boldness and truth of that great master, and bearing beneath it the following inscription, "Oliver Cromwell, Protector of England." *

The thunder of another door permitted me only to glance at the portrait and to replace the curtain. The drawing-room door opened, and in

* This portrait hung in the drawing-room of the lodge attached to the college, of which the Protector was a member. The following legend concerning it was believed by old Simmonds. Many years ago—it is not said how many—a letter was received by the existing master of the college, desiring that the gates and lodge door should be left open at a certain hour of the night, and free access afforded to the drawing-room, in order that the picture of Oliver Cromwell might be therein deposited, in compliance with his own dying request. It was hinted, at the same time, that if any endeavour were made to discover either the donor or bearer of the gift, the portrait would be for ever lost to the college, and curiosity still left ungratified. The terms were strictly complied with, and the picture found its way in: for the next morning it was hanging on the wall.

an invalid's chair, wheeled into my presence by the aforesaid lackey, entered the Vice-chancellor.

He was a fine man, tall, sinewy, and robust-looking; his chest was broad and manly, his voice strong and sonorous, his face very florid, and his hair white as the purified particles of snow. Beholding him as I did at our first interview, an experienced physiognomist would have drawn two conclusions. First, that nature had never intended the Vice-chancellor for such a chair; and secondly, that his living was good, and he did not quarrel with it. He was wheeled to the fireplace, and he bade me be seated next to him.

"And now, sir," he began, "what's your business?"

If he had accused me of robbing him I could not have been more alarmed than when he put this question to me. Had I made a mistake? Come to the wrong college, for instance? I thought it advisable to give him at once the note of invitation that I had received. He took it silently, and read it. He then looked hard at me, and read it again.

"How long have you been in Cambridge?" said he.

"Since last night, sir."

"Are you a freshman?"

"Yes, sir."

"What college?"

"Trinity, sir."

"Have you made any acquaintances yet?"

"Only Simmonds's, sir, the gyp's."

"Ring that bell."

I rang it, and my old friend the lackey appeared.

"Breakfast!" said the Vice-chancellor.

"Sir?" quoth the footman, as one who had not quite understood the order.

"Breakfast!" was repeated in a tone of command, that at one and the same time frightened the man out of the room, and me into the very corner of the large chair in which I was sitting.

The breakfast was soon brought. The footman made the tea, and waited upon us. The master ate and drank very little—almost as little, indeed, as myself, who had by this time begun to feel any how but comfortable, and to find no very great pleasure in the especial mark of favour with which I had been indulged.

'From what part of the country do you come, my lad?" enquired the Vice-chancellor when the cloth was removed, and with more kindly an air than he had shown before. ("A curious question," thought I, "after enquiring so particularly respecting the health of my father and mother!").

"From London, sir," I replied.

"From London! that's very remarkable! and how old are you?"

"Eighteen, sir," said I, getting confidence from the Vice-chancellor's increasing amenity of manners.

'Then you ought to be thoroughly ashamed of yourself," was the damping reply. "What! a Londoner—and eighteen years of age! to be gulled like a———oh—oh—oh, this infernal gout! You young fool," he roared out, "what do you mean by it?"

I jumped from my seat in great trepidation, and thought, all things considered, I had better go back again. My hand was on the door when he summoned me to my chair.

"Sit down, and hear what I have to say. Somebody has made a fool of you. That letter is an imposition. I never invited you to breakfast."

"No, sir! I am sure I'm very sorry then———"

"Never mind, are you certain you've made no man's acquaintance?"

"I am sure I haven't, sir. I only came last night."

"How did you get here?"

"By coach, sir, from London."

"With whom did you travel?"

Now the very moment the Vice-chancellor put the question to me, the form of Mr. James Temple, with his hypocritical serious face, rose up before me; and I felt as certain as I did of my own identity, that to him, and to no one else, was I indebted for this very agreeable business. "With two under-graduates, sir—Mr. Solomon Levy, a gentleman of very great respectability—and two ladies."

"Do you know the under-graduates' names?"

"Yes, sir. Temple."

"Their college?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Very well, young man. I'm glad to see you so straightforward," said my questioner, writing down the name. "And now, before you go, take a word of advice. If you don't improve very rapidly, this is likely to be not the last occasion of your being duped. You must be a man, sir—think, act, and feel like a man—oh—oh, this cursed gout! Do you hear what I say, you goose?" and he bellowed out again.

"Yes, sir."

"Then why don't you answer, when you see me in such pain? I tell you it will not do to be a boy, where all your companions are men. What's the use of your looking at that sofa whilst I am talking?—look at me, can't you? If ever you receive such letters again, put them into the fire at once, and don't believe them. You must learn your true position as soon as you can; until you do, you never can be comfortable or at your ease. Attend well to your studies, and keep good hours. I suppose you know the proverb—*Aurora amica musarum.* When *I* was a student, I was never out of bed after nine o'clock in the evening, or in it after six in the morning. Winter or summer makes no difference to an honest student, who has his work to do, and will get through it. I have never known such happy hours as those spent as an under-graduate in this college. All summers were as one summer, and all winters as one winter, they were so much alike. Every season found me at my books, and whether the birds whistled, and the sun shone warm upon my study, or whether it was dark and dreary without, and I had to sit by my snug fire, and read by my little lamp, the simple fact of my being industrious was the same. There I was to be found; and I have reaped the good reward. Look at me, sir! the representative of one who is the representative of so many glorious, noble, and religious foundations. Be assured, young man, excellence in any one thing is not to be reached without the closest perseverance and the severest self-denial."

I was not a little staggered by the Vice-chancellor's reminiscence of his early days. Here were two old men, both greyheaded, telling one story, yet so differently, that, without attempting to mince either the subject-matter, or my expression, I was brought to the very disagreeable necessity of regarding one of them as the most eminent and egregious old liar that had ever been endowed with the faculty of speech. I made, for the nonce, a philosophical inference. The Vice-chancellor was a great man, and could not lie. Poor Simmonds was a hireling, and did so *ex-officio.*

"I desire to say one word more before you go, and that is with regard to your attendance at chapel. Your college will exact only a certain number of attendances during the week; but you will ask your conscience

what *it* will require, and if it will be satisfied with anything short of a regular daily regard for the ordinances of your religion. Christianity, young man, is neither classics nor mathematics: it is something superior to both; these are indeed the food and substance of the mind, but that is the mind's regulator. It pleases me to find that you are so attentive to what I say. If you ask me what will improve the temper, render us amiable, regardful of our social duties, good politicians, benevolent members of society, and perfect gentlemen, I answer Christianity; and to subdue and overcome the pains both of body and of mind, I may freely say, from experience, I know nothing so powerful and efficacious." Here the gout became once more exceedingly troublesome, and caused great pain to the worthy speaker. There arose first a rapid and sharp drawing of the breath, then the blatant roar——"Ring the bell, you young rascal!" almost *screeched* the Vice-chancellor, rolling in his chair with agony. I rushed to the rope, and in my violent haste pulled it to the ground without provoking the slightest tinkling from the bell. The master stared at me as if he would have strangled me, had he been at liberty and able, which, thank Heaven, he was not! He bit his lip and frowned, tossed about and groaned, and at last it burst out—

"D—mn you, you young villain, can't you bawl upon the stairs?"

This concluding practical illustration of the master's own doctrine, was favourable at least to my good opinion of poor Simmonds, who, I must confess, during the first part of the Vice-chancellor's last speech, had been rapidly sinking in my estimation. When I returned to my rooms, the old man was busy in the repairs of the cupboard and "cellars."

I had now been two days absent from my parents, and for the first time working in life, as it were, on my own account. Surely my short experience had been neither creditable to the world, nor satisfactory to the humble individual who had thrown himself upon its sympathies and good-nature! My treatment had been rather that of a dog venturing into a pre-occupied kennel, than of a human being joining the social commonwealth, and seeking the rights and immunities of a denizen. It was impossible to avoid the flattering conviction, that both by Mr. Temple and the Vice-chancellor—the former scarcely a month older than myself, and that was the most unpleasant reflection in the whole transaction—I was regarded as no better than a fool, to be played upon or insulted, according to the present and prevailing humour of the party that took me in hand. Temple had insulted me *covertly* when he bantered me in the orchard-ground, and, in writing the letter, had *openly* played upon me. The Vice-chancellor had proceeded contrariwise. He tacitly played upon me when he ordered the breakfast, and without disguise or reservation, grossly insulted me, as the reader has seen.

These thoughts, as I lay in bed the second night, irritated and distressed me.

I envied the happier condition of those who had spent their days in the world, making themselves conversant with the doings and the habits of men—who were entitled to assume a position in the community, and could command its respect. And then I passed on to my own home—shall I confess it?—blushing by the way for that simple and domestic grace which was its ornament and honour. Yes, for a moment I became madly impatient and tormented, and during the wild paroxysm suffered base and cruel thoughts to make a fiend and monster of me. Thank God! it was but for a moment; for could I live and bear about with me one thought that should impair the fulness of my filial love? Happily, my folly took another bent. Burning with shame for the indignities I had suffered, and

determined upon revenge—such a revenge as in its perfect gratification should humble those who looked upon me with contempt, and take from my own mind the smarting sting that had been inflicted there—I made a zealous vow, and at once embarked every feeling and desire in the labour of the fulfilment. The solemn promise made to myself was this: Every energy and talent that I possessed, I resolved henceforward to dedicate to the pursuits and employments, the honours and rewards, of the university. My father and mother should be revered for my sake, and those who trifled with me now, should be taught respect for my acquirements, if not for myself. With the vitality and vehemence of a passion, did the idea of distinction force itself upon my imagination; and, like the passion of a boy, it was restless and uneasy till some steps were taken for its indulgence. Stamped on my memory, never to be obliterated, is the day on which I attended my first lecture. With an emulous and quivering curiosity, I listened to the answers of those who were of the same standing as myself, and judged from their readiness and ability both of the amount of knowledge that was arrayed against me, and the order of minds with which I had to contend. As the papers of some were handed to me to be passed on to the tutor, I detained them in their passage for one eager snatch of sight, in order to compare the proofs and results with those I had already given on the same questions. Did I discover the slightest discrepancy in my favour, a problem brought out with less care, defective only in one step, I hugged the knowledge to my heart, and was rejoiced indeed. It was a sweet gratification to me to find, from the tutor's manner, that he was pleased with my work. He looked over my papers with care at first, but before the close of the lecture he was content to give them a glance, and to turn his eye to the result. For some he had a word of complaint, for others reproof.—(He was an iron man, knew his business well, and spoke as he thought, with the same bluntness to the friend of seven years as to the stranger of to-day.)—And to me only, of the whole number, did he accord his unmodified approbation. "Very good, Mr. Stukely—very good!" was the observation that he made upon the last paper that I sent to him. The men at the same moment looked up at me, and I experienced the glory of a triumph.

As I walked from the lecture, across the court to my room, the tutor stopped me.

"What school do you come from, Mr. Stukely?"

I explained to him the nature of my previous reading with the clergyman in our neighbourhood.

"You work out your things very neatly. Come to my rooms after hall to-day."

If before the lecture I had resolved upon my plan of conduct, I was now not to be shaken from the one object of my life by any influence that could be brought against me. I had gone into the room, regarding the men as my natural enemies; but when I left it, my superiority, and, still more, the implied acknowledgment of it on the part of the tutor, had rubbed away the asperity, and brought me to think more charitably of them. I secretly determined, however, upon one course of procedure, and that was, so to conduct myself always before my competitors, as to give them no reason to suppose that I was straining to beat them, and, by every artifice I could practise, to keep them off their guard, drawing their attention chiefly to my own apparent freedom from labour and easiness of disposition. If the usage I had received had effected nothing else, it had been very successful in sowing the seeds of a selfish, sordid hypocrisy.

In the course of a few weeks I became friendly and familiar with more

than one under-graduate of my college. They courted my society: I did not seek theirs. Amongst the rest, there was a man of the same year as myself. He was of a reserved and modest habit, thoughtful and intellectual. In the lecture-room, he caused me more uneasiness than all the others together. We did not meet the first day. He came up afterwards, and soon—too soon, alas! for my equanimity and comfort—he began to share in the favourable expressions and encomiums of the tutor. He was a tall thin man, somewhat older than myself, excessively pale and weak-looking, possessing large and piercing black eyes. He was remarkable for a seeming and complete exemption from all physical exertion and suffering. He glided about so noiselessly, and his doings partook so largely of quietism, that he gave you the notion of a spirit rather than of a human being; or, you might suppose, if your humour were quaint, that the soul was anxious for her fragile covering, so wasted and so wan already, and, for its safety, suspended its accustomed privileges. The paucity of his words corresponded with the inactivity of his body; but, if it were proper to conclude from appearances, the restlessness of his mind made up for both. He had a noble forehead, and, young as he was, a few long and slender hairs only hung dispersed and straggling about his head, as though the incessant working of the brain beneath had blighted and thrown off the rest, and they were soon to follow. This individual had attached himself to me, and early in the period of our acquaintance he would often follow me to my room, and, without exchanging a dozen words, sit listlessly at the window, his emaciated hand supporting his bending head; or he would muse, for an hour or two perhaps, over some dusty work of metaphysics, faintly smiling when he approved, and uttering the monosyllable "*no*" as often as he differed from the author. So would he come and go, careless if his visits pleased, and innocent of the great alarm they caused me. As for myself—knowing how closely in the lecture-room he ran upon my heels, how easily, once or twice, he had unwound a knotty point, that in the strength of its entanglement had set even me at bold defiance, and how, without the shadow of an effort, he executed that which cost me the dearest labour to accomplish—I hated him most heartily, and estimated his visits as you would the encroachments of an adversary, and the stratagems of a spy. There was a scholarship of some value open to freshmen, the examination for which took place at the close of the first academic year. To the attainment of this I looked forward with a sanguineness that could not admit the possibility of failure. I had set my mind, my heart, my happiness, upon it. It was the point in which all hope of after-joy was centred, from which, if ever, the future energies must radiate. After I had tried the ground, and felt it sure, to behold an interloper seizing from my grasp the prize that was already mine! The thought was maddening. What a discomfiture and terrible destruction of all my lofty aspirations! Were they to end in this? I would not permit so wretched a belief. I promised to devote myself, with redoubled energy, to the measures necessary for the coming battle. I might reach him yet! Besides, who knew? the sum of my knowledge might still exceed his, notwithstanding that his acuteness, in solitary instances, had evinced itself at the moment superior to my own. And again I thought—and *from* the thought, the reader will learn how rapidly I was advancing, not only in the knowledge of the doctrine of chances, but of all that was virtuous and lovely in morals—I thought that this sickly fellow could not possibly live long; but looking only to the fair probabilities of the case, I might have confidence and a most reasonable hope that he would be rotting in the grave long before the hour of contest should arrive. I longed,

yet dreaded, to know his own views. Perhaps he did not care for that which, for so many reasons, was of inestimable value to me. Possibly, knowing my strong desire, he would not enter into competition. What could a person, with health so delicate, and a frame so very ill-constituted for arduous pursuits, expect from a distinction that curtailed his future ease, and demanded increasing labour to sustain; since even scholarships, like the more worldly titles, are worthless, unsupported? A little friendly chat would, I was sure, convince a man of sense that his interest and happiness were not to be found in the excitement of college wranglings, for which physical power was no less essential than mental attainments. The arguments were conclusive, and, had I reasoned for a brother, I could not have been more satisfied of their truth and justice. It might be, nevertheless, not quite so easy to persuade *him;* men generally are such very bad judges of their own cases, and their eyes are jaundiced when turned upon themselves. Would he not, however, on that account the more readily listen to his *friend?* At all events it should be tried—but in what manner? This was the difficulty. Once or twice already I had attempted to draw him out, but he had shown himself so close, so little interested in the whole matter, that I could only beat about, and retire at length without advantage. Being desirous that he should attribute my friendly advice only to my regard for him, I was myself apprehensive of appearing too earnest, lest—for I was still in doubt as to the man's real nature—I might haply be caught in my own snare, and only expose myself at last, without learning anything from him. I must proceed most cautiously.

He streamed into my room one morning as usual, and took his customary seat on the top of the coal-cellar. For a wonder, he commenced the conversation, and gave me the opportunity of following it up.

He had taken from his pocket a very old copy of a sermon by Doctor South.

"Stukely," he began, "how very different is the style of the intermediate fathers, as we may call them, to that of our modern divines! In these old books the thoughts bear heavy on the words, which are too weak for what they carry. The oak is planted in the china vessel. With us, the thought is like the needle in the hay—a little matter in a world of waste; when found, not worth the trouble of the searcher."

"Did those men, Grimsley (this was his name), do much at college?"

This question found Grimsley reading again, so that it was not for a little time that he replied.

"What did you say just now, Stukely?"

"Did these fathers fag much when they were up?"

"No doubt, a great deal," was the reply.

"Took good degrees, eh?"

"Unquestionably."

"What strong men they must have been! To look at their fine portraits, and their sturdy figures, printed in their books, one would suppose that they belonged to a much earlier age."

"No, Stukely; these men, as students, were probably no stronger than ourselves. It is the ease of later life (when the struggles of ambition have subsided, and there is nothing more to gain) that brings men flesh, and makes them sleek."

"Yet many die in the conflict; is it not so?"

"Yes; but in some causes death is victory."

"Well, to my thinking, the reward of toil is inadequate to the cost. Even here, how much dogged labour is necessary to arrive at the smallest honours!"

"I agree with you. I would not purchase their chief distinctions at the price so many pay for the most moderate. What waste of body, what drying up of the very sap of life, for dreams and shadows after all! No—the day-labourer in the open fields is a simpler but a wiser man. Still, where moderate labour—and this is both wholesome and needful—leads eventually to honour, I cannot but think it sin to keep our talent idle."

"Isn't there," I asked, carelessly, and determined now to probe him to the very core, "isn't there something of a—a sort of scholarship, that they try for in the college at the end of the year?"

"Yes."

"It's not worth having, I suppose."

"On the contrary, as I hear, it is well worth having."

"You mean to work up for it, then?"

The sword of Damocles hung over me.

"No, certainly not."

I breathed.

"I was sure you wouldn't think it worth *your* while. Come, Grimsley, take a glass of wine. It's a very raw day. This is a very fenny country. Don't you feel it? You haven't had a glass of wine in my room, I do believe, since I have known you. It is really not the thing. You are too abstemious. I take but little, but find that little necessary. No, dear Grimsley," continued I, producing the wine, "I was quite satisfied that you would not go through the wear and tear of a long examination. Besides, in your state of health, of what use would a scholarship be to you? I consider you a philosopher, my dear fellow, for declining it."

"I beg your pardon," said Grimsley, very gently; "I did not say that exactly—you misunderstand me. You asked me if I intended to *work up* for the scholarship, and I said, as I say now—No, decidedly not! It does not follow, if I gain the scholarship *without* working up for it, that I shall think proper to refuse it—I should most certainly do no such thing."

He turned to his book with a sardonic grin, and I despised myself forthwith for the *candour* (!) into which I had been betrayed, as heartily as I did him for his artful deceit.

Matters had now reached the crisis. There was clearly no royal road to the point for which I strove. Away with underplots and sleights of mind! The enemy had shown the cloven foot. It was now open fight, face to face, foot to foot, or else give way at once. Give way! I burned to think it possible. Had I been inclined to do so, the force of circumstances impelled me on. In the college, I had been regarded for some time as the man (all boys are men at college) who must obtain the scholarship. The voice of my fellow-students had given me a prescriptive claim upon it. Finding the contest hopeless, they had themselves retired, one after another, from the ground, yielding it to me. I had merely to walk over it. The tutor himself had more than once advised and made a plan of future reading, when the bustle and anxiety of the examination should be over, and there would be nothing further to contend for. To sum up all, in the extremity and overflow of joyousness, I had so far committed myself as to convey to my father a positive assurance of success, and to inspire him with hopes and expectations that I could not see betrayed and blasted, and still live. It was wonderful, indeed, that, in all their calculations, the under-graduates had made no regard of Grimsley. But, as I have said before, he spoke so very seldom, said so very little when he did speak; his movements were so still and undisturbing; his attenuated form so all unlikely to command attention or awaken fear, that they might, unconcerned observers as they

were, find ample reasons for their marked neglect of him. It was otherwise with me. Carelessness in me was criminal. I dared not conceal from myself the glaring fact, that there were energies concealed within his lathy frame, that, when called forth, would startle by their power; that, beyond this, he enjoyed a clearness of intellect, an extraordinary amount of knowledge, a facility in reducing it to order and giving it expression, that carried him far beyond my level. His coolness and ease, his modest demeanour and his self-devotion, made him only the more terrible; and I noted them as so many additional causes for vigilance and alarm to his antagonist.

Having made myself acquainted with the views of Grimsley, I saw that it was necessary to concentrate all my attention and reading upon the subjects fixed for the examination, and to neglect all else until the issue of that was known.

Grimsley's general knowledge could not avail him there—that was a comforting reflection. Perseverance, I had often heard, was the worst foe to genius. Let him look to that! As for defeat, I would not know the word. After my late interview with him, I became more friendly and sociable with the rest of the under-graduates. I found more pleasure in their society, and their sympathy and attachment were most acceptable to me. I commended myself to their good-nature by many trifling acts of kindness, and imperceptibly identified them with the cause in which I was embarked. Not a whisper did I breathe at the same time of danger, not a syllable of the quarter whence it threatened. Old Simmonds about this time reported to me, that he had heard me very highly spoken of by the fellows in the Combination Room; and one under-graduate (I forget his name, but I remember that once or twice I had worked out his papers for him) had asserted in Hall, at table, "that Stukely was the best fellow in the college, and he hoped that he would have the scholarship without any examination, for he was sure no man of his year had so good a right to it."

Curiously enough, as it may seem, by the advice of my tutor I placed myself in the hands of a *private* tutor, one of those *attachés* of the university, who, for a consideration, relieved the public and paid tutors from the irksome and onerous duties of their office. I do not know what alterations and improvements have taken place since my secession from the university. Neither my inclination nor my occasions have, during the last quarter of a century, carried me back to its proceedings. I have no doubt, however—the more learned and better informed reader will correct me if I err—that this anomaly and others have, in the advance of time, been satisfactorily amended. We have heard of the giant strides of intellect, and the tocsin of reform has resounded through the land, rousing from their slumbers the very hamlets and villages of the soil. The priests of knowledge cannot have slept at the altar with the alarum ringing in their ears. I owe it, as a child of *alma mater* (a prodigal, alas!), to infer otherwise. Men are not faultless, nor institutions either. That was a faulty system, surely, that rendered abortive the exertions and the studies of a man whose fortunes denied him the advantage of private and extraneous aid, who, coming to the university to be taught, found teachers, indeed, wasting their pampered days in idleness—teaching nothing, rioting perhaps on the pious charity of those who had bequeathed their substance, emphatically, for the building up, the maintenance, and the happiness of England's poor scholars. The under-graduate of the present enlightened day will assuredly meet in the closets of the tutor and fellows of his society, that instruction which, in my time, was only to be found at a costly rate *without* the college walls.

Mr. Cube, of St. John's, was a pragmatical gentleman, with a snub nose

and carbuncular visage. In days of yore, St. John's was a snub-nose-and-carbuncular college. The members were known by their looks. Mr. Cube had small peering eyes, protected by spectacles, was very short, but somewhat stout. Ignorant of the ways of life, but desirous at all times to display his good breeding, his usual expressions of politeness constituted a very good harlequinade. You would have smiled at him in a ball-room, and set him down for a country dancing-master.

His days were literally taken up by his pupils; he had so many of them. He enjoyed an extraordinary reputation. He had *crammed* all the best men for the six preceding years, and his very name had become at last a guarantee of success. Hard readers went to him really for the benefit of his judgment and experience, which were powerful and extensive. Men who did not read at all, paid him twenty guineas a term for the mere pleasure of his acquaintance;—knowing, cunning rogues! that there lurked in it some very potent charm, which would work miracles for them on the day of examination in the Senate House. There is a rage and fashion for tutors as well as for cravats and ladies' furbelows—and Mr. Cube was now in the ascendant. He had come up a sizar, had taken the best degree of his year, and his income was already upwards of 1000*l*. He was the son of a curate, formerly a very poor one. His son's success—to that son's honour be it written—had made him rich.

I explained to Mr. Cube my views and prospects. When I had finished, he bade me sit down.

"There are pens and ink. See what you can make of that paper."

In about an hour I had finished the task, and to his satisfaction.

"Well done, Mr. Stukely, well done—that'll do. What books are you reading now?"

I named them.

"Very well, very well. Bring them to me to-morrow. We'll see what can be done. Very fine day, very fine day—good-bye, good-bye;" and he fidgeted me to the door, and bowed me out of the room.

The next day I waited on him.

"Ah, Mr. Stukely, how do you do?—very cloudy. Do you think it will rain?"

It might be presumed that, as Mr. Cube seldom or never left his room, the state of the weather was a subject of comparative indifference to him. Not so; the weather and its effects were a constant topic of discourse.

"The country wants rain—rain's a capital thing, if it didn't make the streets so terribly muddy. You are very punctual—just three minutes and forty-three seconds before your time. That's better than being three minutes and forty-three seconds after it. Take a seat. Oh, you've got your books! Ah, yes! Well, we'll to business at once. Be seated. You'll observe the great secret is this." The door was open, and he rose to shut it.

Now it was coming—the secret—the *great secret*, as he termed it—the key to all the brilliant triumphs of his pupils. Ah, Grimsley, what would you give for this!

"The great secret, as I said before, is this——"

"Yes, sir."

At this moment there was a sharp knocking at the door.

"Come in," cried Mr. Cube.

It was his bedmaker.

"Sir," said that lady, "if you takes away the key of your bedroom, it's quite *un*possible that I can get into it."

Mr. Cube fumbled about his pockets for the instrument, and handed it to her with his usual agitated air of politeness.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Stukely. As I was saying, the secret of the whole matter is this——"

"Yes, sir," replied I again.

And again did that Tartarean door prevent the explanation I was bursting to hear.

The knock this time was a soft one. With many apologies Mr. Cube once more rose from his seat. Turning the handle of the door, he ushered into the room the abominated Grimsley.

The latter bowed to me.

"Ah, Stukely, I had no idea—I beg your pardon. Shall you be disengaged in an hour, Cube?"

"Oh yes! quite—less than that—very dull day, isn't it? so chilly! I hope we sha'n't have any snow. I've heard of snow in this month, though. It would be very awkward. You are sure to find me at leisure in an hour."

Grimsley nodded to me, and departed.

"The secret, Mr. Stukely, is this——"

"Pray, sir," said I, more nervous and agitated than I can express, and in my turn interrupting the momentous communication, "is that gentleman a pupil of yours?"

"Young Grimsley?—oh, no!—couldn't afford it—worthy fellow—father a poor curate near us—nine children—old friend, that's all."

"Have you ever told *him* the secret that you are about to communicate to me?"

"Oh, never talk on business in play hours! Grimsley, kind soul, reads Shakespeare to me—does it beautifully. Talks metaphysics—likes them better than mathematics."

"Well, sir, I didn't care to know. It was only from sheer curiosity."

"Ah, just so! Give me your algebra. You see this is the thing: men fail, not so often in consequence of reading too little, as through reading too much. You look surprised; but it is true, nevertheless: they who throw themselves into large waters sometimes sink. The cautious keep within the depth, and swim. What do you, or what does any man, come to me for?—that he may take a good degree: in order to that end, certain questions will be propounded to him, which he must answer. Get up those answers, and forget all besides." He opened my book. "Now, here's a proof—have you got it up?"

"Yes, sir, and some time it took me too."

"Just so. You found it stiff?"

"No end, sir; but it's a beautiful proof."

"No doubt of it. But I have been here upwards of ten years, and have not seen its face in any examination paper yet. Comus is a very beautiful poem, but if you had it at your fingers' ends, stops and all, it wouldn't get you one mark in the senate-house."

"I read it with a view to my general improvement."

"General improvement, general knowledge, and general literature, are not academic terms; all perhaps very good in their proper places, but sad blocks in the way of a good degree. Here's a formula, have you it by heart?"

"No, sir—but I have a shorter one, which I think better."

"Upon *my* word, Mr. Stukely, this won't do at all. You are on a wrong track. It may be the finest that ever was written; but until you can persuade the examiners that it is so, you will derive no benefit from the fact. The *fellows* who set the papers are as jealously fond of their old

forms and expressions as a mother of her babies. If you alter a verb or a noun, nay, more, if you reject in a sentence a verb that has stood from time immemorial in the shape of an infinitive, only to restore it in the more lively garb of a participle, you'll vex and distress them, and put them out of humour with you and your papers, how great soever may be their merit and yours in every other respect."

"If the substance and sense are correct, may we not use our own words to illustrate them?"

"You may, certainly, if you wish to cut your own throat, but you'll most certainly not be understood. Sense is one thing, words are another; and so attached are the examiners to the strict use of the latter, that, if they were compelled to acknowledge a preference, I verily believe they would answer, as the Lord Hamlet does in the play, '*words, words, words.*' Now remember this above all things, and note well the pencil marks I am about to make in your book. Wherever I put the sign *plus* (+) pass on without reading at all. Ask no questions. What I desire you to neglect, may possibly be useful, instructive, and good; but unfortunately it will do nothing for you. 'The worth of a thing is what it will bring;' and if this brings you nothing in the shape of marks, it is worth nothing. We have no time to throw away upon knowledge for the sake of itself. I intend that you should read *once* all those parts against which you will find a circle drawn so (O); but wherever you find this figure of a triangle (Δ), read, and read to your soul's content. Don't omit a preposition, a syllable, a sign, a stop; read till the matter is as familiar to you as your own name. Have it by *heart*, if it is possible, for that's most agreeable; at all events, by *rote*. Repeat it when you walk—with your grace before meals—and in your bed after prayers. Dream of it, if you can, and, if you are fond of music, sing it to your favourite tunes. And whilst I run through your book," continued Mr. Cube, handing me a paper, "work out these problems, and do them slowly and safely. Never work in a hurry. A false multiplication may ruin a man for life."

And under such skilful pilotry did I pass days and nights in the prosecution of my one great purpose, feverish and anxious always, but driven on by the most resistless of all human impulses. The plan of study forced upon me by Mr. Cube, expedient as I believed it to be, was in itself disagreeable and most unsatisfactory. It was drudgery, the most enervating. The mind revolted from the iron yoke, and yearned again for freedom, for that unshackled perfect liberty which is its birthright, in the blessed enjoyment of which, knowledge is beauty, power, dignity, enduring wealth; deprived of it, is lumber, dross, rust, refuse—anything that loads, disfigures, and degrades.

Teachers of the young, fosterers of the germs of that capacity which we call MIND, beware! It is a heavenly principle that you do take in trust. Touch charily, and with a pious hand, the image of your God!

Frequent had been the communications that had passed between my parents and myself. From my father I received the strongest encouragement; and every argument that could incite me to perseverance, again and again did he reiterate. Blindness of human wisdom! How little did the old man dream that he was adding fuel to the flame that was consuming me—poison to the canker bit that fed upon my vitals. My tender mother—tender is a mother always—with that unworldly virtue so peculiar to her sex—implored me to make no sacrifice of health or happiness for the highest honour that lay within my reach. "What satisfaction, Caleb," she said feelingly in one of her letters, "to your poor mother would be the highest rewards you could obtain, purchased at the price of what is

dearest to me in life? No, my dear boy, return in health to me as you left us; there is no cause that can justify a tampering with the choicest blessing of our condition."

A summer and a winter had passed away. Spring had again burst forth in vigour, enlivening the dull face of nature; the sun grew warmer, and once more the impatient buds, breaking from imprisonment, unfolded to the scented air. The second summer had arrived, and found still undiminished the iron rigour of my service. Heedless of my mother's words, I had spent a year in toil, unflinching, and indeed most trying. Through lack of exercise, and the constant sedentary occupation, my body had become weak, my nerves unstrung, and my pale face and sunken eye true chroniclers of what was rife within. My will and strong determination were, as at first, unconquered and invincible. The issue of the struggle was at hand. I was prepared for it. During the winter I had suffered a month's severe illness. Being, by nature, of a susceptible temperament, small matters, if they jarred or jangled with my desires, fretted me to a high degree. The agitation induced by the novelty and exciting character of my pursuits, in conjunction with a sharp cold, brought on eventually a state of fever which in a night prostrated me, kept me to my bed, and for a short time caused great apprehension for my safety in the minds of those to whose care I was entrusted. During the attack, from which I recovered very slowly, Simmonds had been my constant attendant, nor could any persuasion prevail upon him to leave me until I was thoroughly restored again. When I was first taken ill he made himself a bed upon the floor of the sitting-room, and night after night did he there lie, more awake than asleep, listening to my breathings, and to my every turn, ready with the drink whenever I was athirst, and punctual as a clock with the medicines, which he was so anxious that I should take not one second sooner or later than the time prescribed upon the label. Within this old man's withered case there throbbed a woman's heart. The affections of the softest of that soft sex were not more fond, her patient and religious confidence more constant and enduring.

It was a mild summer's evening, and I quitted my room with a disordered body and not less perturbed mind. I walked through the pensive and shaded alleys that adorn the various colleges, bestowing a rural grace that marks them from the naked barrenness beyond, each college standing in a waste—a thing of beauty in itself. The air was balmy, and the setting sun poured forth a golden stream of light, that broke into a thousand particles, and settled in surpassing brilliancy on every object and in every nook. More like the palace of the Fairy tale, for every pane of glass one spotless dazzling diamond, shone forth that college, the noblest in the world, on which I now looked back.

It was the evening preceding the examination, and I waited, by appointment, on Mr. Cube.

"Here's an evening, Stukely!" exclaimed the tutor as I entered the room. "Delicious, is it not? look at the thermometer. Eighty in the shade all day. What's the matter? you look pale. You have been sitting too long again to-day. Well, your troubles will soon be over."

"Yes, thank Heaven!"

"How many days are there to be?"

"Five."

"What hour do you go in to-morrow?"

"Nine."

"Very well. Suppose we run over your first day's subject now. I

have scribbled some questions for you. Write them out;" and he walked to the open window. "Bless my heart, this is weather indeed!"

It was late when I left Mr. Cube's rooms, and returned to my own. I had answered all his questions correctly, with the exception of three. I did not feel myself secure in that branch of my subject to which these questions referred; and I spent a great portion of this, my last night, in reading it once more over. Day had dawned—the free and blithesome birds were twittering in the morning air—the dews were glittering in the sunny light. I closed my book, and happy men were leaping from their beds as I sought rest in mine.

When I entered the room set apart for the trial of strength, the clock striking nine, some dozen men were already assembled. For the sake of form, but not with the most distant prospect or notion even of success, they were about to take their seats at the broad table that stood in the centre of the room, amply furnished with the *materia* for the coming war. They all shook me heartily by the hand, and were confident in their anticipations of the result of the proceeding, which still they could not consider as admitting the slightest doubt.

"We must have a supper, Stukely," said a fat youth, whose father was Lord Mayor of London.

"Copus, and no mistake," rejoined a thinner gentleman, with a turgid countenance and a blearing eye, strong indications of his favourite habit; "a thing's not legal till it's christened. You get the scholarship, and we'll wet it for you."

"Ah, as you say, get it—that's well advised! If I were as clever at getting as you are at wetting, the matter's done; but this is not so clear."

"Come, get out of that, and sink the blarney if *you* please," responded my bibacious friend. "Isn't it as clear as bricks that you are the man? Doesn't everybody know it; and hasn't your own *coach* said *done* to it six months ago?"

"If you mean to have kidneys," said the young Lord Mayor, in continuation, still harping on the supper, "do tell that wretch of a cook to broil them for Christians, and not to season them with cayenne as if he were dishing them up for devils."

The tutor entered the room, followed by a few men who had loitered about the door, some laughing and jesting, others inhaling the summer air until his arrival. The last who entered was Grimsley. The expression of his features was, as usual, free from all excitement, and he seated himself at the table with his shy and native unobtrusiveness. I sat opposite to him, and gazed on his lank form with fear and wonder. Extreme quiet in anything produces awe in the beholder. It is painful to witness the heavy silence of a sultry day, and terrible sometimes is the storm that it foretells. The examination papers were distributed. I watched my adversary's bearing for a moment, as his eye passed over them—gathering, however, nothing from the scrutiny—then, with a most intense and eager view, turning to my own, I endeavoured at a glance to be possessed of all that was to do. I could not read the wording of the questions. It was too slow an operation. I saw their general bearing, their scope and gist. One look might satisfy me as to that; and oh! relief and ecstasy, as I proudly placed the sheet before me, and knew that this one day at least the strength was equal to the task! In the course of an hour, our company had sensibly decreased. The Lord Mayor became hungry, and retired to lunch. The man of drink was troubled with a tickling in the throat, and could not write another line until he was relieved. One could not work; he never could whilst men were making such a *scritch-scratch*

with their pens, and this poor soul had fainted from his infancy, confined in close oppressive atmospheres. Six out of sixteen then remained. In the afternoon, including Grimsley and myself, four only were found constant to the table. He proceeded steadily, apparently without fatigue. I laboured on, well satisfied with the accuracy of my work—delighted with my progress. The hours allotted were from nine till twelve, and in the afternoon from one till four. At three, Grimsley had finished. He laid his pen aside—folded up his papers, then rising gently, as though he feared to hinder or perplex the rest, he softly went on tip-toe through the room, and took his leave. "He has not answered all; he could not, I am sure." Such was my thought, though I might scarcely stay to think, so close had grown the struggle between the hours and me. It wanted but a minute to the time when I had done. My hand would hardly hold the pen for pain, but the brave limb had done its duty nobly.

Thus for four days did we proceed. At the close of every one I did not fail to spend an hour or two with Mr. Cube, reporting progress, and, as it were, renewing the supplies. It was strange that every day Grimsley should have finished at least an hour before me. Still it was a favourable sign, and gave me hope and courage. I went into the room on the last morning with a lighter heart than I had hitherto borne, and certainly less alarmed for the decision. From the second day up to this time the competitors had been four—a heavy built man, disagreeable in his manners, who knew nobody and whom nobody cared to know, by name Smithson; a young man whose family resided in Cambridge, and who was, in consequence, compelled to attend; Grimsley, and myself. Since the conversation that I had held with him in my room, very little communication had taken place between us. In the examination-room we had only bowed. I hated him because he was so artful, and his persevering opposition had not mitigated the feeling. Once more we took our places, and once more the papers were handed to us. I ran them over, and was most distressed to find that the majority of questions were such as, under the direction of the too-confiding Mr. Cube, I had either neglected altogether, or, seeing the fatal (O) annexed to them, had read only once, and therefore most ineffectually. Alas! my mortification was excessive. But I looked instinctively at Grimsley, and to my unbounded joy perceived him, or I was grievously mistaken, as nonplussed as myself. His arms were folded, resting on the table—his paper lay before him, and his head bending over it with a most gratifying air of serene embarrassment. Had I been dubious on the point, his closing the papers at twelve o'clock, and his leaving the room with his customary silence at the same moment, was convicting evidence. Now, granting that I had beaten him on the preceding day, if we were only equal on this, I had still the advantage. Consoled by this reflection, with my paper not half answered, I rose about two o'clock and hastened to the author of the mischief.

"Well, Stukely," said Mr. Cube, "you're out early to-day. Floored the paper—eh?"

"Not exactly. It has floored me."

"What do you mean?"

I explained.

"Ah!" exclaimed the tutor—"it's that sly-boots Decimal. He set the papers. Great enemy of mine. Knew my plan of reading. Did it to sell you and bother me."

"It's very hard, though," said I, pettishly, "that I should suffer from his aversion to you."

"Ah, my dear fellow, fortune of war! Make yourself happy. I'll return

the compliment one of these fine days. Talking of fine days, such a continuation of glorious weather I don't remember since I was twelve years old."

It was the custom, a few days after a college examination, to affix in the hall a paper containing the names of all the competitors, written in the order of their merit. He who had gained the first place, would appear first on the list, and so on. In due course the morning came that was to realise or wither my best hopes, to compensate, I fondly trusted, for the melancholy servitude and self-denial of the year that had elapsed. Nervous, indeed, I was, and most impatient and unquiet. Upon going to rest the previous night, I determined to lie asleep, if possible, until a very late hour, and to rise just as the announcement was put up, so that nothing should intervene between my rising and rushing to the Hall for the result. But this I found to be impracticable. I was restless all night, and restless in the morning. When daylight peered into the room, I felt that I should go mad if I lay longer unemployed. A good walk far into the country would, I conceived, divert the current of my thoughts, and give tone and cheerfulness to my jaded spirits. I might return about an hour after the declaration was made, the men would see me fresh from the trip, and would not fail to observe, that the only party who looked with unconcern to the state of the poll, was the very individual who was himself at the head of it. This step I adopted. I took the ferry across the water, streamed on through fields, farm-yards, and villages; now watching the stately movements of a large family of geese, now sitting beside some ruminating cow, and vainly sighing that vaccine peace and quiet were not communicable as vaccine *pus*. Sometimes I listened to the wild melody of unseen birds, and one long hour I passed in a road-side public-house, trifling with the words of an old newspaper—reading the lines backwards, or turning them into unmeaning anagrams; and tired of that at last, scratching on the window with a pin, almost unconsciously, the name of Grimsley. How strange the fiend should haunt me when I had taken so much pains to exorcise him!

I returned to Cambridge after an absence of some hours, walking with good speed until I entered the town, then sauntering through it, and afterwards into the college, with a most idle and indifferent air. It must be an experienced player to act well so difficult a part. I first sped to my room. Nobody was there; but I spied from the window old Simmonds crawling along the court, his bending body still more bent, his palsied gait more trembling and inert. He had that very moment issued from the hall, and was possessed of all I burned and feared to know. I tapped gently on the glass. The old man looked quickly round: his face was ghastly pale. Poor creature, he was ill! He did not see me—if he did, he *would* not, for he went on his road. I shook with terror, and grew sick at heart. "Why does the old man look so white?—he loves me, and he knows that I have set my life upon the cast. Present fears," thought I, "are less than horrible imaginings. I should be easy any way, if I were only satisfied. Suspense is dreadful." With a bold step, I left my room and trode across the court, and then into the hall. Many men were there. As I entered, they walked back a step or two, and looked upon me with an eye of sorrow and commiseration. It was enough. Grimsley was there—I could have struck him dead at my foot. I approached the paper. My eye became dizzy as I read three names following each other in this succession—

SMITHSON.
STUKELY.
GRIMSLEY.

For a moment I was blind and stunned. I could not speak. The rest were silent. I reeled to my room—I know not how I reached it; and there sat, the tears dropping and dropping from eyes that nature should have parched up, the old man who had coiled about my heart! I recollect nothing more. I fell down before him, as though stricken to the earth by a thunder-stone.

PART III.

COLLEGE.

——— Thus the warm youth
Whom love deludes into his thorny wilds,
Through flowery tempting paths, or leads a life
Of fever'd rapture, or of cruel care;
His brightest aims extinguish'd all, and all
His lively moments running down to waste.
Thomson.

I WOKE from the state of syncope into which I had been thrown by the unhappy result of the contest, to be conscious of a degradation, deep and insupportable. What could I do? Whither should I go? How escape from the ridicule which every man would cast upon me? To have been beaten was now not the consideration. *To be known* as defeated—to be recognised as the man who had so modestly condescended to receive the premature congratulation of his friends—who had made sure of his prize, and missed it after all!—to live in the college, a memorable instance of disappointed hope and vanquished self-sufficiency;—this, all this, was not to be borne. I walked about in my room in a state of inconceivable wretchedness and mental disturbance. Simmonds sat over the fire, imploring me to be at peace, and raking away at the cinders to conceal his own too evident grief.

"Do not take on so, sir," said the old man; "what is the use of it? This only makes matters worse."

"O Simmonds!" I exclaimed, "what will the men think?"

"Yes, and what will they think next year," asked Simmonds, with a vain attempt at cheerfulness, "when you have beaten every one of them?"

"And my poor father, what will he say?"

"Why, what can he say, sir? Everybody knows you did your best——"

"No," I answered quickly, "I did not do my best; this would not have happened if I had. I have been too careless all through, and this is the consequence."

"If you had not been so ill, I am sure you would have done a great deal more. You were knocked up before you went in."

I was appeased by the good man's remark.

"Yes, Simmonds, I was ill—very ill—and the men must have observed it. Do you not think so?"

"No doubt of it, sir; and Mr. Smithson has such a constitution! I am sure nothing would bring his flesh down. Doesn't he look like it?"

"He looks more like a bricklayer than a gentleman," I answered pettishly. "Who is this Smithson?"

"Don't you know, sir? He is Mr. Squareroot's nephew, and the son of a Norfolk clergyman."

"What!" I exclaimed, almost knocked down with surprise, "what is it you say? Smithson, the tutor's nephew? Squareroot's—the tutor's?"

"Yes, sir, the tutor's."

"This, then, is the secret of it all." (Ah, me! why was I so eager to jump at any but the simple and apparent cause of my defeat?) "No wonder that I am beaten. Newton would not have been successful. Indeed he would not. And poor Grimsley, too," (this with marked tenderness,) "no wonder that your quiet spirit and cultivated mind were doomed to succumb! Is this generally known, Simmonds?"

"Oh, bless you! yes, sir. In the college all the gentlemen know it; but he is not a great favourite with them. He is not very friendly in his manner, and he keeps a good deal to himself."

"Now answer me, Simmonds. Do not you, for one, feel satisfied that favour has been shown to Smithson, and I have lost the scholarship unfairly?"

"Why, as to that, sir, I cannot say, really—I don't think——"

"Ah, poor fellow, you dare not tell me what you think! You eat their bread, and are bound to them. It is not so with me. Let them be assured the matter shall not rest here."

"I think you are wrong—I do indeed, sir," said the gyp. "Mr. Squareroot is a gentleman of strict integrity, and, I believe, would rather lose his hand than let it do a dirty action. It is Mr. Smithson's constitution, sir, and nothing else, believe me."

I answered my worthy friend with a sneer, and truly happy was I to find, an hour afterwards, that I did not stand alone in the suspicions that I entertained of the justice and honour of the college functionary.

In truth, the cordial sympathy that so suddenly burst upon me from my fellow-students, was at once a panacea to my broken spirits. Instead of averted looks, or signs of triumph and ridicule, their recognitions were friendly and encouraging. As to the favour which had been afforded Smithson, they were, to a man, quite satisfied of that—and their indignation at the fact by far surpassed my own. Their advice to take immediate steps for the exposure of the "precious system," was offered in all the warmth of a brotherly regard, and urged with one consent. There was one individual especially indignant and violent in his counsel. A tall, fair-haired, dissipated youth, who had not opened any but his betting-book since his appearance in Cambridge, and who, with an income of three hundred pounds a-year, lived at the rate of as many thousands; but this I knew not at the time. As I have said, Mr. Easyman, more than all the rest, was affected with choler at my disappointment.

"Of course," said he, "I knew how it would be. Why didn't *I* go in for the scholarship? Why do I take life easy? What's the use of reading, when everything is settled beforehand? Upon my honour," (Mr. Easyman never went higher than this,) "I believe the best men do nothing at all at college. They are wise, and see what's what with half an eye."

The conversation, of which the above elegant extract formed a part, was held in my own room, about an hour after I had been made acquainted in the hall with the success of Mr. Smithson. A body of men had flocked thither to offer me their condolence, and to assure me of their readiness and desire to make my grievance unconditionally their own. Many speeches were made on the subject; and, as every one had something important and original to advance, it may easily be conceived that our meeting became at intervals exceedingly noisy, and the difficulty of drawing attention on the part of individuals inconveniently great. At one moment, my friends would deem it expedient to fall simultaneously into a violent

rage, and to discharge themselves of their anger at one and the same moment; then Bedlam itself seemed loosed into the room. Afterwards there would be a corresponding silence; every one stopped for breath at once, and then every one bellowed out again. These continued alternations of excessive violence and extreme repose could not but be very distressing to the lodger overhead. They proved so. The rooms immediately above my own were occupied by Mr. Squareroot himself; and at this very time he was busy, in his capacity of moderator, in the concoction of divers mathematical puzzles, with which to tickle the brains of his friends at the ensuing bachelor's examination. Annoyed at length beyond his power of endurance, he sent his servant to us with a particular request, that we should be more temperate in the *sound* at least of our remarks; by which very natural and certainly justifiable proceeding, the tutor increased to its height the bitter feeling which was already engendered against him. Its effect, however, was decisive, for perfect silence ensued, and it was left for Mr. Easyman, in these memorable words, to break it.

"Gentlemen," he said in an under tone, and looking around him, "the right of discussion is contested with us. This only was wanting. But we will give the enemy no advantage. Let us separate now, but let me see you all in *my* rooms this afternoon to *wine*. No tutors will interrupt us there. Stukely, I shall expect you."

Which invitation being given and accepted, and a few remarks made afterwards in a subdued and gentle voice, the meeting for the present separated.

The hour of Mr. Easyman's wine-party arrived. I was about to set out for his rooms. I did not feel comfortable. I could not say that I was on really good terms with any one, least of all with myself. What could render me so irritable and vexed? No doubt the shameful conduct of Mr. Squareroot—the impudent trickery of him and his ill-favoured relative. Old Simmonds, who was in my bedroom during the visit of my friends in the morning, as I now walked across the room to depart, asked me, as I thought somewhat sharply, if I really intended to go.

"Go!" I answered hastily—"intend to go! What do you mean, old man? Most certainly I intend to go. Didn't you hear this morning? This barefaced piece of business isn't to rest here. Every one is satisfied of their conduct. Others have seen through it, and have known it all along."

"It is not for me to say, sir," said the gyp, very calmly, "what is the opinion, or what are the motives of those gentlemen. You are not one of them—you have never been one of them—and you must not become one. If you do, God help you!"

"Well, I'm sure! It is a pretty thing for you to dictate to me in this way. I tell you what it is, Simmonds, I have permitted you to go on after this fashion too long. I ought to have checked you at once. A younger man shouldn't have presumed so far, I can assure you."

"Mr. Stukely," said the old man, "you frighten me. I know very well where all this ends. I have not been in college sixty years for nothing."

"Do you mean to insult me? I shall not submit to your impertinence. I suppose you think you may just say and do what you please *now*—but you'll find your mistake."

"Why can't you," continued the old man, taking no notice of my violence, "why can't you sit down to-night quietly and comfortably, as you have done always? You never wanted to go out before this evening, and you have been happy enough too."

"Sit down! No, I'll not sit down, until I have made my injury known to the whole world."

"Oh, dear me!" said the imperturbable gyp, "how can you talk such nonsense? Why will you deceive yourself? Who will believe you? Do you think that Mr. Squareroot's character is not too well known? He wouldn't do such a thing to be made chancellor to-morrow. There's a dear gentleman, give me your hat, and don't tease yourself any more about the matter. There now, the kettle's boiling—do sit down and let me make your tea."

"No, Simmonds, this will not do. I have promised my friends, and they will see me redressed."

"They will see you laughed at, sir. Every one will laugh at you, if you run about making this complaint."

The gyp had reached a vulnerable part. I shrunk from ridicule as the horned snail does from the finger touch. An indistinct apprehension of his meaning disarmed me in an instant. The colour mounted to my cheek. I stood irresolute. Simmonds profited by the opportunity, and slipped my hat from my hands.

"I'll write home to my father," I said at length, sighing in great perplexity. "Simmonds, fetch me some letter-paper."

"Have you none here, sir?" enquired the poor fellow, looking nervously into my portfolio, and afraid to leave me.

"None: I used the last yesterday."

"Very well then," he replied, evidently much annoyed, "I suppose I must get some;" and he walked off—very quickly for him—taking care to shut the door carefully after him.

The hour of my appointment was already past. I had resolved. Simmonds after all might be right. I would not go. I would that evening write to my father, explain the circumstances to him, and beg him at once to withdraw me from the university, with which I was already very much disgusted. It was a good resolution. The shadow of Mr. Easyman shrouded me as I made it. I looked up, and lo! that gentleman was smiling at the window.

"Hallo!" said he. "Bricked up? Upon my honour, that's very clever. Open sesame, if you please. Fine animal that of yours," continued he, entering my room. "Rather groggy just now. First-rate in his time—almost ready for the knacker. I wonder what he is saying now to old Squareroot."

"Whom do you refer to?"

"Your Caliban Simmonds."

"Is he with Squareroot now?"

"Yes. I saw him as I crossed the court. Oh! Caliban is a sweet boy for his age. But they are all in one game; and I will say this for the whole tribe, they do play most cleverly into one another's hands."

"Are they really so bad?"

"Worse than housebreakers. Never mind. Come along, we are all waiting for you."

"Well, do you know, I was thinking, Easyman——"

"Oh! don't think—there's a good fellow! There's really no time for it to-day. You shall think to-morrow, and act now. You know you have given your word to the men" (and the hat that Simmonds had a moment before enticed from my hand, the wily Easyman insidiously restored to it). "It is your own party, and they are all eager to give you the meeting. They will never leave you, my boy, until you are righted. They are the real sort, depend upon it—true blood to the back-bone."

"I really do not feel inclined—I cannot go——"

"Why, my dear fellow, consider—you wouldn't have the men laugh at you?"

I plunged my head into the hat, and rushed out of the room with him.

"But is it true," I asked, when we reached his door, "that you saw Simmonds a minute or two ago with the tutor?"

"As true as I see you now—upon my honour."

"Then, Easyman, that old man is neither more nor less than a grey-headed devil."

Mr. Easyman had, without exception, the very best rooms in the college. Why should they not be? they were the most expensive. The manner in which they were fitted up did credit to his taste. Mr. Easyman was not an ordinary man. He prided himself upon his knowledge of the fitness of things. A stranger would discover his peculiar talent at a glance. He was a walking illustration of himself—of his own mind. His dress, his air, his gait, his very hand, were so many indices to his inner self. There was a union, a harmony, certain corresponding effects, in all of them. They all bore testimony to the innate sense of order and propriety. Walk into his abode—you were struck with the costliness and elegance of the furniture, but not so much with these as with the remarkable adaptation and blending of the several pieces. Every one was perfect; and, with reference to the others, exactly in that particular spot which it would have selected for itself, had it been endued with the powers of sense and motion. Shall I describe his bedroom? My pen halts. It is some years since, for the first time, I read the poem of *Lalla Rookh*, (who shall read it a second time, and not grow faint from the excessive sweetness?) and the descriptions of joyous indolence in that romance, brought to my recollection the sublime dormitory of Mr. Easyman. It was emphatically eastern—and admirably suited to the ambitious and extravagant notions of a man living, as I have before mentioned, with a lofty contempt of his own poor means, in a most eastern and inconsiderate manner.

Mr. Easyman opened the door, and introduced me to his company. There were about fifteen of them. They rose, their glasses in their hands—for the libations had already commenced—and, with one cheering halloo, they welcomed me amongst them. Violent applause is dangerous to the object of it—always. If the object is a fool, it is ruinous indeed. I smiled radiantly upon the assembly, and in a moment was repaid for much of my past anxiety and wretchedness. I felt, as I sat down amongst so many ardent and devoted spirits, that if the wicked Simmonds might observe my triumph, I could forgive even him his foul iniquity. The room was a spacious one, and the table placed in the centre of it, round which the guests were seated, was well supplied with fruits, confections, and the choicest wines. The chairs were all occupied but one. This was the honoured seat, reserved for me. Amongst the company I noticed my friend the *paulo-post-futurum* Lord Mayor, and the thin drinking gentleman. There was another individual present, by no means to be disregarded in this relation. He was the connection of a celebrated tragedian of the day, remarkable for his frequent quotation of Shakspeare, and for the pertinacity with which he insisted upon obliging his friends, during vacation time, with orders for the play. His name was Deboos. He accosted me, as I entered, with the following words:—

> "Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,
> Were the graced person of our *Stukely* present,'
> Who may I rather challenge for unkindness
> Than pity for mischance."

"That's the fifth time you have said that, Boosey" (so he was called by his familiars); "now don't say it any more." Thus spoke Mr. Laurel, the Lord Mayor. "Stukely," he added, addressing me in a low tone, "I am happy to see you—sit down." His chair was next to mine. "I have not seen you since our sell. We have been floored cleanly. We couldn't help it—that's a great consolation. I saw the thing at once, and cried *done* in time. You died game."

But Mr. Laurel was interrupted; for the decanters on the table had already performed a rapid gyration, and the glasses became musical, from the tinkling sounds that were drawn from them. Mr. Easyman had resumed his seat, which was distinguished from the rest by being raised slightly above them, and he now struck the table with great rapidity and vehemence. Silence being obtained, he rose:—"Gentlemen," he commenced, "I am no speaker; but you know my plan. Procrastination is the thief of time. It was my favourite copy at school. I act upon the maxim now—never postpone till to-morrow what you can do to-day. To business. Are your glasses charged, my boys? Stukely, you stop the bottle. Fill your glass, and pass it on."

I obeyed, attentive to my host's address, and watching the point of convergence to which his words were tending.

"His Majesty—God bless him!" exclaimed Mr. Easyman after a proper pause, and with all the gravity so solemn a benediction demanded.

"His Majesty—God bless him!" shouted with more fervour, and less ceremony, a thousand voices condensed into fifteen. As the thunder abated, the silver tones of Mr. Deboos were caught lingering at the close with—

> "Not all the waters of the rough rude sea
> Can wash the balm from an anointed king."

There succeeded to this a quarter of an hour's animated conversation, characterised, as indeed many of the subsequent discussions of the evening were, not so much by abstruseness or learned acumen, as by the happy facility which every one displayed in leaping from one subject to another in an inconceivably short space of time. Not that deep and abstract matters were entirely neglected. Far from it; but they were treated with so lively and novel a disposition, that they must have astonished a sober-minded individual who had previously taken pains to think seriously about them, or to make his head giddy with their pleasing perplexities. Opinions were offered, and difficult points mooted and settled, with a freedom and grace that were truly refreshing. Great, indeed, are the advantages of a university education! It was my nature to be shy and silent in mixed companies; but by the very force of example, I became by degrees an impassioned and eloquent speaker. It was very gratifying, indeed, to my vanity to perceive that every word I uttered, every notion I ventured to submit—and silly enough were many—was listened to with fixed attention, and acknowledged by universal approbation. It is worthy of remark, that, before I had spent an hour with my friends, every one of them, without exception, after having done honour to the usual toasts, did me the kindness to drink my health, and to wish me prosperity. Most exhilarated did I become—most grateful for their attentive and affectionate regard. A warm glow sprung up at my heart, and unconsciously a tear or two trickled down my cheeks, as though with very superfluity of happiness. And then the grand business of Smithson was discussed, and, I must confess it, almost too soon disposed of. But the subject was an unpleasant one, and my supporters were glad to withdraw themselves from

the pressure of it. I cannot but add, that, as time wore on, even I could not bring myself to esteem the very occasion of our meeting as forming the chief delight of it. I had rather a peculiar pleasure from the very act of forcing all thoughts of Smithson from my mind, and giving myself up unconditionally to the excited and animated scene around me. The never-ending, still-beginning process of the wine-bottle, did not slacken with the approach of twilight. The sun went down in surpassing splendour. I looked out upon him as his eye of fire closed upon the world. "Never before," thought I, "has he left such jocund spirits on the earth behind him." The dusky middle light of eve—the soft crepuscule—delicious as it is in little country parlours, through which, laden with pensive thought and breathless melody, it steals with a religious quiet—calls up no gladly feeling in the heart of him who plies his calling at the shrine of Bacchus. Comes it with reproach to him, or does it, from the vasty depths, invoke images of bygone innocence and peace? Is it too touching and too soft, or does the one short hour of absent glare make legible the naked characters of shame? Mr. Easyman could not probably explain his motive, but the fact is certain. No sooner had the sun departed, and left the denizens of earth to stretch their limbs, and breathe cool air again, than did our worthy host desire the attendant gyp to close the shutters and "bring in the wax."

And soon hilarity became intense, and the several warm hearts then melted into one. And then the wine, that had performed its part so well, took leave, and came no more; but, in its stead, a thrilling mixture, mysterious in its power and in the union of its elements, whose luscious drops searched blood, and bone, and marrow, and lit up with fire the very seat of all sensation. I tasted, and electric pleasure started through my frame, demanding still another and another taste, until at length I revelled unresisting in delicious draughts. Nor was the revelling confined to me. The bright nectar found willing entrance at every lip, and many bowls gave evidence of untiring flavour and enduring virtue. Twilight gave place to night—bowl had succeeded bowl with terrible dispatch. Mr. Easyman grew flushed. He rose to speak the praise of punch, and, in his capacity of toastmaster, he said laconically, and in Greek of course—

"Το καλον."

"Και το αριστον," screamed out the company.

"Do you mean it?" enquired the host.

"Do we not?" was the interrogative reply.

"Woodlouse!—pipes," cried the giver of the feast to his gyp, Mr. Woodhouse. "Pipes and tobacco."

The αριστον (pipes and tobacco) was brought; and a short silence prevailed, whilst the room became dim with smoke, and the candles sickened in thick vapours.

"Now, lads," resumed Mr. Easyman, shutting one eye, and looking knowingly with the other at a glass of the mixture which he held in one hand, his pipe falling gracefully from the other, "let me give you το καλον και το αριστον."

A tremendous cheer, and a stunning knocking upon the table, and a corresponding kicking under it, marked the welcome which the classic toast received from all.

"Come, my φιλαγιστης," said the guest on my left. This was the great Greek scholar of the company, who was allowed by every one present to be the first classic of his year; but, by some unaccountable mistake, was dragged out afterwards somewhere behind the last. "Come, my φιλη," said he, hitting me on the back with a violence that made

me, in the condition to which I was brought, exceedingly nervous and uncomfortable, "blow and be happy," and he thrust a pipe into my hand.

I had never smoked a pipe before. I was unequal to the task, but still more to that of sitting unmoved amidst a host of cloud-gatherers, the sole consumer of a suffocating fog. Partly to avoid this disagreeable alternative, partly to lose none of the regard that I had gained up to this period of the festival, and partly because I was so very warm and reckless, that I was ready to do anything in the shape of a request, I took the clay without a syllable of reply, and proceeded, awkwardly enough, to the successive steps of filling, stopping, lighting, and imbibing. And oh, what obfuscation and confusion! With the first fumes of the tobacco, my brain received a shock. The whole scene became immediately a moving panorama. The company, table, chairs—everything passed rapidly round me, then suddenly stood still, and left me sick and tottering. I caught at the table, as I fondly hoped, unperceived; for, deplorable as I felt, I was still more than ever susceptible of shame. The sense of feebleness was more than half subdued by the mental exertion which I forced to my aid. I seized a glass of the intoxicating liquor; the nausea was for a time overcome, and my spirits flashed up with new fire.

Midnight had long since stolen away, leaving the assembly not more willing for separation than it had been six hours before. I heard St. Mary's clock strike three, and, about the same time, remember to have seen a vision of my classic neighbour. He was "upon his legs," as far as it is competent for me to assert this of a staggering and reeling man, whose legs obstinately disregarded their natural duty, and left the trunk to seek support elsewhere. He was in the act of addressing the chair. His manner was oily and insinuating; but his speech, unconnected, and made up of Greek, Latin, and drunken English, cruelly betrayed the lamentable state into which he had fallen. "Mr. Chairman," he hiccupped out, after having already spoken for some time, and with great eagerness—"Mr. Chairman, I don't know what I am going to say, and it's no odds to nobody; two negatives don't make an affirmative—put that down. The ancients," and he made a low bow—"I always make a *koton* to the ancients—that's pious; the ancients never knew what they were going to say; vide Cicero—'*rum* bene provisam, verba haud invita sequentur.'"

"*Rum!*" exclaimed Mr. Deboos, with a contemptuous curve of the lip; "*rem*, if *you* please."

"Order, order! chair, chair!" proceeded from half-a-dozen husky voices, and a moment afterwards there issued, as it might be from my very feet, a long, loud, irrelevant groan. I looked down, and beheld clinging to my chair, pale as death, my right hand neighbour, Mr. Laurel. Oh, the internal commotion that I suffered then! I forced my eyes, not slowly, from the disgusting object, and relied upon crushing the rapidly-rising physical phenomena by a tremendous concentration of all my attention upon the speaker. But the speaker had already finished. The interruption of Mr. Deboos had led to a further interruption on the part of the other gentlemen, and the jovial scene unexpectedly became one of alarming tumult and disorder. Unfortunately for the general peace, Mr. Deboos obstinately contended for the emendation which he had thought proper to introduce in the foregoing Latinity, and treated the judgment of the chair, who decided in favour of the orator, with no more respect than he had listened in the first instance to the classic himself. Unhappily, too, the chair himself just now was not in circumstances to brook opposition in respect of any matter whatever. His eye had become bloodshot and

furious. When he spoke, he raged at the top of his voice, and his gesticulation assumed all the violent incoherence of an uncontrollable madman. He was very drunk indeed; but Mr. Deboos would talk, and would have the last word.

"You son of a strolling vagabond," screamed out Easyman at last, "if you don't be quiet, I'll smash you, so help me——!"

And at the same time he seized a full goblet of punch, and held it threateningly before the unlucky Shaksperian.

"*Ah ha, boy!*" retorted the latter in derision, "*say'st thou so? Art thou there, Truepenny? Come on—you hear this fellow in the cellarage;*" and then added, with more profound contempt, "*Drunk—speak, parrot—squabble—swagger—swear.*"

At the close of which apt speech, and in spite of the interference of his friends, who endeavoured to save him from what they clearly saw would be the finale to his discourse, he received on his broad forehead, and from the powerful hand of his host, the glass and its contents, which sent him bleeding and senseless to the ground.

The men rushed to the help of poor Deboos, but Easyman himself did not move from his place. He filled another goblet with liquor—drank off its contents at a draught—threw the glass in a frenzy on the floor, and, whilst it flew about in a thousand pieces, swore, with a fearful oath, that he would in like manner break the bones of any one who offered the least assistance to his victim.

Things looked very black, and I grew alarmed; but I kept my seat. Two or three men, in spite of Easyman's threat, persisted in restoring the fallen Deboos, or in an attempt to restore him, for he seemed dead; the rest crowded round the host himself, seeking by various and opposite means to pacify him, and to fix him in his chair. As may be supposed, the worrying rendered him more infuriate. He continued to swear, every succeeding oath rising more awful than the last, and to struggle against a dozen men with the strength and passion of a giant. Amongst the choicest of Mr. Easyman's many valuable possessions was a watch of exquisite manufacture. It was a repeater, the smallest that had ever been seen. It had been admired by every one; and the owner, in his sober moments, valued it above all other things. It was indeed a gem. Its price would have furnished the materials of happiness to many a starving creature. This precious ornament was now swinging in the air, and the violent efforts of so many friends of order threatened its speedy destruction.

"The watch, the watch!" shrieked a dozen voices, pulling the wearer a dozen different ways.

"What do you mean?" roared Easyman, dashing every individual from him. "You infernal robbers, what do you mean?" and he tore the miniature clock from his neck, hurled it with desperate violence to the ground, and stamped madly and repeatedly upon it, until the little beauty was reduced to atoms.

Passing notice has already been taken in this narrative of the thin drinking gentleman. For him was reserved, and in his own peculiar fashion, the task of subduing the fierce disturber. He had admitted into his small frame more than his just proportion of the liquid fire, but unremitting habit had fortified his little stomach, and made the drink innocuous as water. At the height of the affray he rose from his seat, and surveyed Mr. Easyman with a steady, sober look; he watched a favourable opportunity, seized it, and then, without a syllable, felled him like a bullock to the earth. Had I not been a witness to this act, cruel and dastardly as it was, in spite of Paley, I could not have believed it possible.

I looked at the aggressor, with what I intended to be a most expressive gaze of angry reprimand. He smiled upon me with contempt; and turning from me to the affrighted guests, unruffled and in a gentle voice, he bade them carry their quiet host to bed. By his direction four of the party lifted the insensible Easyman from the ground, and conveyed him off. He followed in silence; but the rest of the men, excepting always those excluded by physical incapacity, crowded in the rear, stamping and yelling as though they were savages dancing the war-dance, and singing the death-song, before the immolation of a sacrifice. Believing, I know not why, that the murder of my friend was the next business to be performed by the thin ruffian, if indeed it had not been already perpetrated by him, I determined to stand up (metaphorically speaking) in the defence of the poor sufferer, and to venture my life, if it were necessary, in the attempt to rescue him. Had I fallen down dead at this instant, the jury would have performed their duty carelessly if they had not written me down *insane*. Whilst I had a clear knowledge of the broad facts, I am sure that I must have been mad. My brain was whirling, and I was losing fast all power of restraint. I reached Easyman's bedroom, as the body-bearers were placing him on the fine quilt that covered his luxurious bed. He was still senseless—he moaned deeply and at intervals, with a convulsive catching in the throat that was to me indicative of fast-approaching death. But the small fiend was still unmoved.

"Now," said the latter, turning back his wristbands, as if he had business to do, and it was time to set about it; "now, Woodhouse!" and he bawled with a voice that ought to have awakened Easyman. "Woodhouse—mustard—and a quart of water—warm." Turning to the bed, he loosened the cravat and unbuttoned the shirt-collar of the groaning man. Then, feeling his pulse with the gravity of a doctor, he sat quietly down, and awaited the arrival of the gyp.

Into the measure of water he threw a quantity of the mustard, and stirred it well. Desiring the men to raise Easyman upon his back, he himself applied his fingers to the drunken man's mouth, opened it, as you would that of an unwilling horse, and then poured down the liquid, as through a funnel, in sudden doses, and with many stops. In a short minute or two, the disturbing quality of the medicine was beautifully apparent. A violent natural effort on the part of Easyman caused the company to retreat with great precipitation, and restored the sufferer himself to consciousness. But such a consciousness! Oh, it sickened you to behold it! no longer raving and roaring, the man appeared to have sunk in spirit below the level of a poltroon. He whined and groaned alternately, and tears that might have had their origin in fatuity—such feebleness of mind, so perfect a prostration of soul, did they evince—rolled piteously down his cheeks. He sobbed with fear, and shook from head to foot, and besought the men around him, in the most supplicating terms, not to leave him in his present miserable plight. Although he partially recognized every individual who came near and spoke to him, I could not believe that his reason was wholly given back. Who could look upon him, and subscribe to so humiliating a conclusion? He could not be sober. Drunkenness had but assumed another form. The fiend was still making merry with humanity, tricking him in another and more offensive garb, for his own sport and pastime.

"Oh, I am *so* ill!" cried the wretched sniveller. "What shall I do? It's a shame to treat a man so in his own house. Don't leave me—there's a dear fellow! I am sure I am dying."

"Nonsense," replied his medical attendant, "go to sleep, you fool!"

and he put him on his back again, and threw the clothes in a heap over his head.

Easyman made no resistance, but whined like a beaten cur, beneath his coverings. Again and again he assured us he was dying, implored some one to keep him company, and protested against the cruelty and ingratitude of "treating a man in this way in his own rooms."

In the midst of these protestations, by the desire of our leader, we departed, and returned forthwith to the banqueting-room, where, in truth, the scene was not more pleasant than that which we had quitted. Five men were lying on the ground in different stages of intoxication. The eyes of one protruded from their sockets, and with a stupid stare were fixed upon the ceiling. Every muscle of his countenance was rigid, and from his lips oozed forth a sluggish saliva, that played about the corners of his mouth in frothy bubbles. "The last internal throes of death," thought I, "may already have taken place." Another man lay at the very feet of this one. He was fast asleep, and snored with a constancy and vigour that no noise could conquer, no human efforts might abate. A third man sat under the table, clinging to its legs, and smiling sottishly. He was talking aloud—to himself—to characters which his fancy conjured up—to the inanimate table—and severally to its four inanimate legs. Perfect sensual enjoyment beamed from his watery eyes. Mr. Laurel, son of the civic dignitary, so to speak, wallowed like a dog in his own mire, and was, indeed, in sore distress. His cheeks were ashy pale, his lips bloodless. His head was torn with pain, it was plunged deep into the palms of both hands, and he breathed hard, and swung about, like one struggling to cast off suffering. He had made a sad mistake. With the instinct of his tribe, he had, during the whole of the evening, partaken largely and greedily of *all* the eatables. These, consisting chiefly of sweet cakes and sugary preparations, had kicked against rather than socially blended with the port wine and strong tobacco smoke, which not frugally had entered his weak dyspeptic stomach. Hence his present miserable state.

Connected with the room in which we were, and opening into it, was an antechamber of very moderate dimensions—a narrow slip, devoted to the reception of coats, and cloaks, and such-like gear. Into this hole, and at the instance of the little iron man, the five unfortunates were cast. The only one who was aware of the proceedings—the Lord Mayor himself—submitted to the operation with a languid resignation. The four insensibles said nothing. We saw them "safely stowed," and—will it be believed?—drew once more round the table and the bowl.

* * * * * * * *

When I awoke from a disturbed uneasy sleep, the sun was overhead. It was broad noon. An intolerable throbbing at the temples, a general racking headache, a burning throat, a fever-coated tongue, a sickness at the heart, prostrating, annihilating. Thus reduced, I rose from the carpet on which I had slept, in the horrid chamber of the symposium, and, almost overwhelmed by the fumes that hung around me, by the disgusting aspect of the disordered room, loathing myself, and hating all the world, I crawled away, and slunk into my room.

With a trembling hand, and with the soul of a criminal, I took from my desk a letter which had arrived by the morning's post. The tears dropped slowly and heavily upon the handwriting of my mother. She expected my return daily, hourly. She was most anxious to behold me, longing to clasp me again in her arms, and to congratulate me on the happy issue of my hard study and noble perseverance. My father had communicated to her the strong assurances which I had forwarded of my strength and easy

success, and she reproached herself lest her frequent motherly counsels might have interfered in any way with the perfect fulfilment of my laudable desires. These were the terms of her epistle, which had fallen fresh and unsuspecting from her affectionate heart. Oh, could she but have seen me now, how would that heart have snapped at once!—what bitterness—what anguish might it have been spared!

If shame had not made me irresolute, the dissipation of the past night would have rendered me incapable of action. It stunned me to think—to move was a sickening effort. I closed the door, and tottered to my bed. Late in the afternoon I awoke, feverish and unrefreshed, quivering in body, crushed in spirit, the slave of a triumphant devil—cowering beneath a dismal hypochondria.

As I sat silently wretched over the cold fireplace, my feet upon the fender, my head reposing in my hands, Simmonds unlocked the door, and stepped into the room.

"I am very sorry, sir," began the old man; "but the master wants to see you. I hope it is nothing serious; but you had better go."

The blood mounted to my cheek, my anger was great, my hatred of the old man more bitter than ever; but I beat the fender with my feet, and said nothing.

"Ah!" continued the gyp, deploringly, "I knew no good would come of it. I wish the devil would never let another drop of liquor into the world again. My heart alive! how pale you look. Well, sir, it can't be helped now. You must make the best of it. But, pray go. This is the third time that I have been sent for you."

"What does the master want with *me*?" I enquired, in a surly tone and without moving.

"I don't know, sir, and I am afraid to guess."

"You lie! you grey-haired Iscariot!" I replied, turning upon him like a tiger. "You know enough; too much for me. Go about your business, and never let me hear your canting voice again. Ah! you barefaced Judas."

The only answer to my abuse was a mild and piteous look, a long and deep-drawn sigh.

"I shall not go to the master."

"Pray do, sir," said Simmonds, earnestly; "pray, pray go. If anything is amiss, the master is not very hard: it's a word or two, and then done with. He forgives and forgets in a moment. But if you are obstinate, you'll force him to be severe, and I don't know what will be the consequence."

Either the advice was not lost upon me, or I had not courage to act in opposition to it. I *did* go to the master. Having dismissed Simmonds, I made a careful toilet, assumed a cheerfulness, and hastened to the lodge.

The late Bishop of ——— was then president of the college. He was at this time beloved for that primitive simplicity and real modesty that adorned his later life. When I was ushered into his presence, I felt confounded and abashed. The mildness of his eye—his open countenance—the refreshing purity of his whole expression, all satisfactory and soothing to a virtuous observer, were so many reproaches to a spirit conscious of recent transgression, guilty, and ill at ease. As I stood before the worthy master, "eaten by shame," my conscience forced me to contrast my present irksome littleness with the disgraceful tyranny that I had exercised towards Simmonds a few minutes before, and I was grateful that the gyp was not an eye-witness of my humiliation.

The master was writing when I entered; he wrote on for a second or two, and then he raised his head and looked at me. "Mr. Stukely," he

said, putting his pen gently upon the table, "I am glad that you have come, and that you see the propriety of attempting no concealment. However easily you might escape from me, you would find it a difficult task to elude the hands of justice."

"Sir!——"

"I cannot express to you how thoroughly annoyed and grieved I am at this unhappy event. I will do you the justice to believe that you bore your unfortunate victim no malice, and that the act which you committed in the moment of intoxication was not premeditated in the hour of reason and sobriety."

"Sir!——"

"I have no desire to wound you with reproaches. Your mind is surely sufficiently disturbed. But I must tell you that the character which you have hitherto borne in the college did not prepare me for this interview. Whilst it is my duty to enforce your residence in Cambridge until Mr. Deboos is pronounced out of danger, let me, as a friend, entreat you to offer up your grateful acknowledgments to that Power which alone has saved you from becoming a murderer."

"Sir!" I shrieked out, jumping back a step or two.

"Mr. Stukely," continued the master, "do not aggravate your offence by this light conduct. I had hoped to find you sensible of your situation, and am sorry to see you not yet free from the influence of liquor."

Many confused ideas rushed into my brain at the same moment. They settled into three distinct: I was indeed drunk—or dreaming—or the master himself was mad. In my difficulty I asked faintly what was the matter, and what I had done.

"Rather let me ask you, Mr. Stukely, why you persist in such assurance? Do you think it possible to deceive me by this artful line of conduct? Pray take care—do not add crime to crime."

There is no doubt that, if I had been sober the night before, I should at this juncture have demanded boldly a full explanation from my accuser. But the drink had so mashed my intellect, had put my frame into such a novel state of giddy disturbance, that I more than questioned my right to do anything of the kind. I therefore remained silent, and, as well as I could, called to my recollection all that had happened, in order to justify the master in the course he was taking.

"Where did you spend the past night, Mr. Stukely?" enquired the principal. My attention was called to the next question before I could find a satisfactory answer to the first.

"Was Mr. Deboos in your company?"

"He *was*, sir," I replied, sighing at the general picture of the scene which the name of this unlucky gentleman vividly called up.

"Ah!" said the good master, noticing the deep-drawn breath; "this is more becoming. I am quite aware of it. You passed the night with him and with other gentlemen—is it not so?"

I nodded my head.

"Well, then, listen to what I say: You must remain for the present in the town. I will place no other restraint upon you. When the medical attendant of Mr. Deboos assures me that all dangerous symptoms have disappeared, you will receive your *exeat*, but not till then. I hope that the information which I have received touching this discreditable business is not in every particular correct. It will be comforting to believe that you did not know what you were doing at the time; and I sincerely trust that you now regret, very deeply regret, the injury which you have inflicted upon this unfortunate young man."

"I beg your pardon, sir——"

"Mine is easily granted, but you must seek forgiveness elsewhere, Mr. Stukely." The master had scarcely uttered these words, when his servant entered and announced "dinner." The footman held the door open, and the master rose.

"I have nothing more to say, Mr. Stukely—you will not fail to do what is necessary. Good-morning."

And the venerable principal went to dinner.

I stood stupidly still, then walked nervously up and down the room, and at last rushed out, with the intention of following the master. The man in livery hastened after me.

"That way, sir," said he, in an insinuating voice, and urging me gently before him—"that way, sir;" and I went on till I reached the door, which he quickly opened, and as quickly closed upon me.

More than half crazed, and almost blind with irritation, I sought my own abode again. What *could* be the meaning of it all? What had I to do with Deboos? What had happened to him for which I was answerable, or in any way culpable? He had received a blow—a fearful one, it is true—from Easyman, and had been carried to his room, bleeding and insensible. *That* I well remembered; but what was this to me more than to any other individual spectator? Ha! was it conceivable that the men, one and all, had falsely charged me with the crime? The thought crossed my brain, and at last possessed it till I became frantic. Deboos was dying, perhaps—who knew but he was dead already?—and they had all conspired to bring me to the gallows! What was I to do, if they persisted in such an accusation? Who would believe me singly, and against them all? What did they care for me, so long as they might preserve themselves? I was a stranger to them—they had been long united—might they not consider it a melancholy duty to sacrifice me for the general safety? "Oh! would to Heaven that I had never gone to that accursed meeting! Oh! sweet news for my poor mother, when she would hear of me to-morrow as the drunkard and the assassin! What was to become of me *now?*"

I was not in a humour to receive visitors, and one was sitting in my room when I arrived. His back was towards me; but he rose when he heard my footstep, and looked me in the face. Were my eyes sporting with my reason? Was this another drunken vision? No, I was not deceived. My coach companion, the man who had played the first trick upon me—James Temple really stood before me.

Since I parted with him on the eventful evening of my advent, I had neither seen nor heard from him. This was not surprising. I had hitherto passed my days chiefly within walls. He was a member of another college, and his pleasures and pursuits led him into haunts with which I was unacquainted, and into the society of men with whom I enjoyed nothing in common. His presence staggered me. I could not guess his business. My experience of him inclined me to think it no good one, and my temper, roused to mischief, sprung at the opportunity which was fairly afforded me to bully and to quarrel.

"How dare you," said I, pale, I am sure, with anger and annoyance, "how dare you show your face here?"

"It required some boldness, I allow," said Temple; "but since I have come, you will hardly turn me out, Stukely, without a word?"

"Didn't you write that letter?" I continued, my flesh tingling with a cutting sense of shame: "didn't you write that letter, I say, asking me to breakfast with the vice-chancellor? Answer me—didn't you?" and I was ready to burst with vexation at the bare revival of the fact.

"My sole object in coming here now," answered Temple, evidently affected and subdued by my excitement, "is to acknowledge that I did so."

"You own it then, do you?" I replied, puzzled, now that he had confessed it, as to what I should say or do next.

"I hope, Stukely, that it is never too late to confess—never too late to be sorry for doing wrong. I have not behaved well towards you. It was a boyish trick—foolish in every way. I regret it deeply. I could not rest until I had asked your pardon, and you had freely forgiven me. Will you do so now? In a few months I leave Cambridge. We may never meet again. Let us part friends. Will you take my hand?"

"It was villanous conduct though," I replied, determined not to commit myself by any friendly acknowledgments, before I had fully decided upon the proper conduct to be pursued.

"Say no more about it. I have reproached myself a thousand times, and have suffered sharper pangs than you yourself would desire to inflict upon me. What can I do more than plead guilty to the charge, and express my unfeigned grief? What would you have me do? Tell me, and judge of my sorrow and sincerity by the eagerness with which I attend to your wishes."

Instead of listening to him, my attention was called to my present doubtful position, and the great need in which I stood of a friend and adviser—matters of much more importance to me, than the friendship or even the life of the speaker. By the time he had finished, I was prepared, without any view to him or his motives, but with the most calculating selfishness, to extend the forgiveness which would cost me nothing, and to secure his services, which would be worth a great deal.

Yet, not without an air of wounded pride, nor without some show of dignity and condescension, did I permit the cordial grasp so eagerly desired by Temple. Once given, however, the gates of separation loosed, and a rapid stream of friendly interchangements flowed. Soon I learned his college history; and, bound by the act of confidence, soon did I disburden my own over-loaded soul. I communicated everything. With more seriousness than I had expected from my former volatile companion, he listened to my moving tale, and with a kindliness of feeling that spoke for the truth of his contrition, more emphatically than a thousand protestations, he volunteered "to *pioneer*" me through my difficulties, and to aid me with his counsel and experience.

"It is now late," he said, at the close of a long and confidential conversation. "Seven o'clock, by Jupiter! I must be off, and you will not be sorry to kiss your pillow after the night's carouse. Good-night—to-morrow, or the next day, you shall see me again."

"Oh, say to-morrow!" I replied, very loth to part with him at all.

"If I can I will, but I must not promise. I go out in January, and there is three years' work to do in nearly as many months. According to the latest calculations, I have but five hours to spare. With six months clear before me which I could call my own, I might have taken my ease. Considerate *alma mater* is not hard upon her young ones. Long may her religious and ancient foundations rest undisturbed!"

"Well, wait a little longer now."

"Don't ask me—good-by till we meet again."

He departed, and left me to myself—a hideous companion in my present mood. To my great comfort, he returned almost immediately.

"You are dull and low-spirited this evening. What say you, Stukely?—will you take a stroll? You may be the better for it. It will cool your head."

"No, thank you, Temple," I replied, "I would rather keep at home to-night."

"Well, perhaps you are right; good-by once more."

He was on the threshold, when I called him back.

"Do you *really* think that it will cool my head? Well, the fresh air may revive me. I shall be back before eight o'clock."

"As early as you please. But do not be persuaded."

"I'll walk a little way."

As we crossed the court, I begged Temple to enquire at Deboos's rooms "if the gentleman was still in danger." *He was very bad!*

My friend's apartments were distant about a mile from the college. He rented the principal rooms of a small cottage, whose front was adorned with a thick-spreading vine, and sweet flowers rising from the ground and clambering to the windows. It was a dwelling for a hermit or a lover. I accompanied him to the door; and, as I shook him by the hand at parting, the quiet freshness of the place touched me, and started a deeply-seated sigh.

"You are cold after your walk," said Temple looking at me; "step in, and take a cordial."

"No, no," I said shuddering, and loathing the very thought of liquor; "no, Temple, no more drink."

"Well, not for the world unless you are disposed. I shall not persuade you; but I am not a stranger to your sensations. A bitter cordial, mark you, medicinally——"

"No; do not ask me. I will step into your pretty cot for a minute—look at your rooms, and then away."

"After you, then," said Temple, motioning forwards.

His rooms were small, but very snug. The order and arrangement of the quiet furniture—the pretty chimney ornaments—the small flower-pots, covered with green paper fantastically cut—the painted china vase, with its graceful flowers, newly culled, all bespoke a woman's hand, and the presidency of a spirit less rigorous than man's. The apartment thus distinguished was occupied by four individuals, friends of my host, and apparently not unexpected. They were about his own age, and undergraduates. Their caps and gowns were thrown carelessly over two chairs, which deformed one angle of the room, and disturbed the general harmony.

I was made known to the visitors, who bowed civilly and formally to me, evincing neither pleasure nor dislike at the introduction, and making no further effort to arrive at intimacy.

"Rest yourself there a moment, Stukely, and never mind *us*. Here's a book of drawings. Amuse yourself." And he placed a cosey arm-chair before me, and at the same time a handsomely-bound book in my hand. "But stay, I have forgotten the cordial."

Before company, I had power to resist no longer. He produced from a square mahogany case a miniature decanter, from which he poured a very small quantity of creamy liquid.

"It is proper stuff, I can assure you."

It was delicious indeed—very pungent and very bitter, but so felicitously adapted to the existing state of my palate, that, if they were not created for each other, it was a splendid accident that brought them into union. I sat down refreshed, lolled in the chair, and turned over the leaves of the sketch-book. Whilst I was busy, Temple and his friends were not idle. A square table, covered with green baize, was rolled into the centre of the

room, and two candles, at opposite corners, were placed upon it. Temple and three of the visitors sat over against one another in pairs. A pack of cards were taken from a drawer, were shuffled, cut, distributed, then scattered, and collected—performing, in their various turns, the thirteen mystic acts that make up——Whist.

The players were good. I knew the game obscurely, and their skill compelled my whole attention. In spite of my good resolution to return by eight o'clock, I sat for an hour or two with great composure and delight. I might have sat for an hour or two longer, if Temple had not taken care of me. The fourth visitor at length cut in, and Temple, whose place he had taken, called me aside.

"Now Stukely," said he, "return to college. You cannot afford at present to give them a fresh cause of complaint; you may get into trouble, and I should never forgive myself if I were the cause of it. It must not be. You shall see me to-morrow; take care of yourself."

"This is indeed kind of you, Temple," I replied, squeezing his hand; "you are a true friend."

"I shall live to convince you that I am." he answered, returning my grasp. "Good-night; never mind the men—they are very busy, and we have no ceremony here."

I shook my considerate friend once more by the hand, and departed from the cottage. The night was very fair. The moon was up, and filled the earth with tranquil loveliness. The light of noon was shed abroad without the glare. It was a passionless day, and no night. A medicinal healing softness does the moonshine pour upon a wounded heart. I knew it, as I issued from beneath the cottage eaves; and very sad was I to think how soon the moon would disappear, and the harsh day return again! As I stepped from the doorway into the open road, the casement above my head was hastily thrown up. Turning towards it, with a natural impulse, I beheld, stooping from the window, a young and handsome female. By the light that shone, her jet-black hair and ivory skin were visible; just for one instant did I gaze, and then the form, observing me, withdrew. One hasty glance formed but a slight connection with this moonlight vision; yet, by this first and slender link had the great enemy secured my future misery and fall.

Daylight brought back the cares of day. Rising the following morning, my first concern was to ascertain the state of Deboos's health, and this was very satisfactory. My next to visit Easyman; he had received his *exeat*, and had gone to London! So had also all the men who had shared with me his hospitality. With this information, I turned to a more difficult task—a letter to my mother. Temple, during our pleasant walk on the preceding evening, had strongly enforced the necessity of writing home immediately, in order to secure myself against exposure, and to save my parents needless sorrow and alarm. The plan of future conduct which my new counsellor had marked out, may be partly gathered from the epistle which I forwarded. It was as follows:—

"Dearest Mother,—You will no doubt be surprised to hear that I have determined, subject to your permission, to remain in Cambridge during the long vacation. Your surprise will cease, however, when I inform you, that the scholarship of which you have heard so much will not be tried for until next commencement. They have allowed us longer time to read the subjects. Dearest mother, how I regret this separation, you can guess. I am consoled, however, when I reflect that I am doing my duty. It is impossible to have the opportunities for reading at home which we find here; and there is no doubt that, by remaining up, I shall eventually

secure what all of us have so much at heart. Who knows so well as you, that if I were allowed to follow my own inclination, I should not remain another hour absent from my home! Believe me,

"Dearest Mother,

"Your dutiful and loving son,

"CALEB STUKELY."

"*P.S.*—As the long vacation will be expensive, I should be grateful for a further remittance of fifty pounds."

Such was the letter, advised by Mr. Temple, written by myself. We are generally proud of our portraits. I turn away from mine with shame!

Villanous and full of lies, however, as this precious document undoubtedly is, let me have credit with the reader for the very small under-current of virtue that runs hidden from his view. When Temple suggested to me that my father might be grieved and vexed at my failure—my mother possibly rendered frantic if she heard of my critical position, anxiety for them melted me, and rendered me susceptible of any impression. When he told me that, in a few days, Deboos would be well, and no more heard of *that;* that if I waited up, and read determinedly and hard, I should be sure to get the scholarship given to second year's men, which scholarship I could assure my honoured parents was the one they knew of; when he added, too, that in my case to speak the truth was vicious—I was prepared to write as I was taught: nor did I blush to do so, and to add, at *his* particular desire, the small request that figured in the postscript.

After the lapse of a few days the post brought down the sum required, and with it a long, loving letter, that would have saved me from the precipice on which I stood, but that a new and fatal fascination lured me onwards, and kept me spellbound till I should make the final leap, and plunge headlong to ruin. A second and a third time the same whist party met in Temple's rooms, and I was there, a mere spectator, as at first. Temple maintained a steady, considerate regard, offered me on all occasions a slight refreshment, and at an early hour insisted on my taking leave of him; so very much he feared that late hours would give offence at college, and he might be the cause of any trouble. Ever as I passed the cottage door, curiosity prompted me to gaze above, and catch another glimpse of the fair form—but the accident did not occur again. Once I asked Temple who the lady was. He answered me with a smile, and tapped me on the shoulder, "All in good time; you shall know by-and-by;" and then, with no good reason, I coloured up and looked ashamed.

At the end of a fortnight, Deboos was able to get about again. He had received a severe wound, and had greatly suffered from pain and loss of blood. I received justice from the good Shaksperian. His first business, after his recovery, was to wait upon the master, and to exonerate me from all share in the affray by which he had nearly lost his life. Neither his debility, nor the awful termination of his last quotations, prevented him from addressing the master in his usual strain.

> "I had rather," he said, "have this tongue cut from my mouth,
> Than it should do offence to *Caleb Stukely;*
> Yet I persuade myself, to speak the truth
> Shall nothing wrong him. Thus it is, master."

And, in his original fashion, he proceeded to explain the cause of quarrel, and Easyman's violent aggression. Deboos's heart was good, and in it he

found something to quote even to excuse the man who had neither pity nor regard for him. He added,

> "More of this matter can I not report.
> But men are men—the best sometimes forget,
> And even in rage strike those that wish them best."

Shortly after our visit to the master, I accompanied the worthy Deboos to the inn, from which he was about to set out on his way to his native town. He took his seat in the coach, and gave me his hand.

"The men have acted vilely by you, Stukely, in this business. You have been a victim, and, upon my soul, I am sorry for you."

"Don't mention it," I replied with *naïveté*. "I am grateful for what you have done for me."

"Ah, Stukely," he said, breaking out afresh,

> "Thou art e'en as just a man
> As e'er my conversation coped withal.
> * * * * * Thou hast been
> As one in suffering all, that suffers nothing.
> A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
> Has ta'en with equal thanks;—and bless'd are those
> Whose——"

The speech was not finished. The coach started in the middle of it, and I heard Shakspeare from the lips of Mr. Deboos for the last time. Upon the day that I received from the master permission to leave Cambridge, Temple strongly recommended me to take lodgings in the neighbourhood of his cottage. He believed that the purer air of the suburb would invigorate my constitution, and that the influences of the lovely situation would be highly favourable to the reading. Nothing could be kinder than the interest which he took in my welfare. What could be more friendly than this advice? I acted upon it with alacrity. Two rooms of moderate size, in a cottage that was attached to a farm-house, I selected for my residence. My books were removed from college. I placed them on the shelves with a cheerfulness that I had not known for many months. I felt my heart new opened. A determined desire to do well, that augured promisingly for my future peace of mind, gave a briskness to my movements, and a glad activity to my thoughts. Temple called upon me whilst I was thus employed, and his spirits were as elated as my own.

"This is comfortable, indeed, Stukely. Ah, we shall make all right, yet! A little relaxation and proper enjoyment, to recover you from the annoyances of the past, and then you will have strength for anything."

"I am resolved at least, Temple, to be wiser for the time to come. I have been very unfortunate; but if I have learned nothing from misfortune I deserve to suffer again. In the first place, I shall read no more with Cube. I am satisfied that he floored me! If I had read what he desired me to omit, and omitted what he advised me to read, I should have done better. It serves me right."

"Not at all. It is the fault of the place. Everything is done in excitement. I hate excitement. You may depend upon it, Cambridge life will always be disgusting until they learn to take things quietly. No man can live comfortably in a constant sweat."

"And yet, Temple, how many men have become immortal under this very system!"

"You mean to say—in spite of it!"

"Ah me," said I pricked by my love of approbation, "what would I give to become a great man! It is worth something to be spoken of by all the world. But it will never be. I feel that I shall never do any good. The first failure has been a deathblow to me."

"I don't believe it."

"And I hope not. But I can never read another page with confidence. And they say confidence is the parent of success."

"Yes, as we should say at Newmarket, 'Success, got by Confidence out of Hard Labour.' But when you have put your harness on again, and have spent a few pleasant evenings with us, you'll have a different tale to tell. By the way, you'll dine with us to-day? There will be nobody but my cousin, whom you have not yet seen. In the evening your old friends will amuse you with a rubber."

"They are first-rate players, are they not?" said I.

"Yes, pretty fair. You are not asleep either. From an observation that you made the other night when Roberts passed my king, I guess that you would be a match for any one of them. You have no taste for the game, and I am glad of it. You have nobler sport before you."

"If you really think I am able, I shouldn't mind trying them this evening. Mind, just for one game."

"As to your ability, I wish I was as sure of a living when I have taken my degree. You shall please yourself, provided that you play for love."

"As to that, I shall not play high, but it wouldn't do to interfere with the other men. Threepenny points will not ruin us. It is but for once. When I begin to work again, nothing, you know, must interfere with that. One night's whist can't ruin a man."

Temple's dinner-hour was four o'clock. Shortly before that hour I had got my little rooms in order, and, as I surveyed them before my departure, I could not but congratulate myself on their genteel and scholastic look. Much reading did I mentally confer upon myself; and, in truth, more passionate love for my shelved friends did I never experience, than when I turned my back upon them, and hastened from the house.

Arriving at the cottage, I opened the door, as was my custom, and walked up stairs. I entered Temple's neatly-furnished room, and beheld, sitting at the table, alone, engaged in needlework, the very lady I had seen before, partially, by moonlight, at the window. Confused by the unexpected sight, and riveted by her uncommon beauty and graceful form, it was a moment or two before I evinced my unwillingness to break upon her privacy, and my readiness to retire. She rose, however, to prevent me, and, with a winning smile, and in a voice that seemed to overflow with melody, she begged me to remain.

"I came to Mr. Temple, madam," I said, looking full upon her, and unable to withdraw the look; "I was not aware——"

The lady answered, "Oh, he will soon be here! Pray be seated. Mr. Stukely, I presume?"

I bowed.

"Mr. Temple expects you. He is very late. Something has detained him." And she went to the window, as if to look for him, and displayed a figure such as I knew to exist in poets' fancies—and only there.

She closed the casement, and took her seat again. "I cannot see him. It is very unfortunate."

I *could* not think so. For I experienced all that mawkish awkwardness which the presence of lovely woman—so elegant and much at ease herself—invariably inspires in caged and colleged spirits; and I was glad to view,

alone and unobserved, the charms that had so suddenly revealed themselves. The lady plied her needle, and kindly bent her head.

How the perception of my inferiority stung me to the quick, as I sat, cowed and speechless, before this gentle specimen of the weaker sex! What topic to introduce, what interesting subject to discuss, alas! I knew not. Many times my broad mouth opened and emitted air, and more than once I sent my eye abroad to catch an object that might afford me matter for a dozen words. Finding nothing, the orb too gladly fixed again upon the lady and her needlework.

The lady spoke at length, in pity or contempt.

"Are you fond of poetry, Mr. Stukely?"

"Oh, very, madam! Are you a poet?"

"I scribble verses sometimes—not worth your reading."

"Perhaps you like mathematics better?"

"I might, if I understood them. Here is a volume of Cowper, my favourite bard. It may entertain you."

"If he is a favourite of yours," I said, with the recklessness of a man driven by a resistless force to say something good or bad, "I am sure he must be worth the reading. How is he for quantities?"

"He has written a very great deal, if you mean that," replied the lady; "but he never tires you. It is not like poetry," she continued, putting a volume into my hands, "it is all so natural and simple—so easy to be understood."

Had I dared, I would have begged her to point out the passages which she particularly approved; but the one brief hair-breadth touch of her alabaster fingers had taken away my speech. I longed for the time to come when I should return the book, and touch that hand again.

The volume contained the translation of the Iliad. My eyes swam convulsively over the page, but saw nothing except a fairy phantom of a narrow hand, with white and tapered fingers. "Yes, madam," I exclaimed, mechanically, "it is very natural, and very easy to be understood."

"Are you an admirer of sketches, Mr. Stukely?" enquired again the owner of the milk-white hand.

"Above all things, madam."

"Oh, you are a sketcher, then!"

"Not in the least. But I hope you have some drawings to show me. I am sure you can draw and paint beautifully; that incomparable hand was made for it," I added, getting delirious.

"I have a book here," said the lady, not noticing the flattery, or whatever else she might deem it, and pointing to the handsomely-bound portfolio which I had often fingered through and through. "I think you have seen it already."

"No, never, madam, I can assure you."

"Here are one or two clever things by an artist, but the rest are mere scratches. This is very pretty now," she exclaimed, putting her finger on a scene in somewhere.

"Celestial!" I exclaimed, with reference to the finger.

"And so is this"——and *so*—very soon we held the book between us. Now she turned over the leaves—now I. My face scorched rapidly, and my heart throbbed and sickened with, I knew not what—a painful enjoyment of the keenest pleasure never before experienced. My head bent over the book, no levers could have raised it, and I turned and turned the pages over immethodically, and almost blind. The black and glossy tresses of the lovely lady, as they streamed with the quick movements of her head, more than once assailed my cheek, and set it tingling with a

wild timidity. Strangely confused, I put my hand near hers—by accident they touched, and then, from head to foot, my poor frame quivered.

Had not Temple's footstep at this serious crisis brought me with balloon speed to the earth again, what would have happened next I cannot say. Perhaps I should have fainted, or, more likely still, have thrown myself at the fair lady's feet, and vowed myself eternally her slave. The fiercest passion may be overcome more easily than is allowed. The fear of discovery, the shame of exposure, subdued me in an instant. I ceased to tremble, and began to think. Retiring a pace or two, I assumed an easy and artistic air, and was deep in the study of "a view in Venice," before Temple reached the door. I flattered myself that I was safe from his suspicion. The lady maintained her position with unaffected calmness, and criticised the compositions up to the very period of his entrance. I listened with undivided attention until she had uttered the last word, and not till then did I venture to return his friendly greeting.

Temple apologised for his unavoidable absence, and introduced me formally to his lady friend. "Stukely," he said, "you have never met my cousin before. Emma, this is my friend Stukely. Stukely, my cousin Emma"—and he smiled slightly, but peculiarly, as he introduced us. I should, in all probability, not have noticed this, had I not recollected immediately, that in the morning he had smiled in precisely the same manner, when he invited me to meet his cousin at dinner. I was puzzled to guess his meaning. Did he wish to insinuate that I had made an interesting impression on the heart of his beauteous relative, upon the evening that she had caught so very partial a glimpse of my form and features? Verily, I believed that such was his design, and straightway I peeped into the looking-glass, and a countenance radiant with complacency and conceit was reflected from that faithful index.

We dined. Temple was in high spirits. But for myself, in spite of every attempt that I made at cheerfulness, and notwithstanding the help afforded by the wine—which wine, by the way, had already ceased to nauseate—I could not rise permanently from the slough of despondency into which the former excitement had effectually cast me. Heavy sighs escaped me at intervals. They would have been remarked by an observer infinitely less keen than James Temple.

"Come, come, Stukely, you must forget the past. Live for the future. All the grumbling in the world cannot alter what has happened. Take my word for it, you will do well next year."

I permitted and encouraged his thoughts to flow in this channel.

"Fill your glass," he continued; "and Emma, you are taking nothing. What ails you both? Thank Heaven, I have not lost *my* appetite."

And to give proof of this, he dived at once into a chicken. I took that opportunity to steal a look at Emma, just to observe her true condition. Her purpose was the same. Electric was the mutual glance. Our eyes met, and I blushed to the forehead. I loathed my food immediately, and ate no more. The dinner ended. Temple, throughout its operation, had been fortunately too busy to note the reason of my uneasiness and confusion. Ever and anon, as often as he reposed from eating (and he ate with an avidity and *gout* that were truly disgusting to me, who could taste nothing), he would still make a passing remark upon the lowness of my spirits, but referring them always to a cause by which I was in no way affected.

Later in the evening, the four inseparables arrived to whist, and shortly before their appearance the lady had retired. I took part in the play, according to the previous arrangement, and became the partner of Temple. But the desire to exercise my skill, which had been so acute in the morn-

ing, had evaporated. Now that Emma had gone, I became restless, and wished to go too; the hours had passed so very quickly whilst she was present, and the minutes lagged so heavily in her absence. Once or twice, the men played out their three cards, and looked to me to follow with the fourth; but the door having suddenly opened on these occasions, my eyes instantly bolted thither, and I forgot the cards, the players, and every other sublunary thing, with the exception of the lovely Emma, whom I expected incontinently to walk in. A servant-maid invariably destroyed the catalepsy.—Strange, that in spite of these interruptions, the men should have applauded my playing throughout! I rose from the table a loser to the extent of three pounds ten shillings.

It was on this eventful night that I became the subject of a mysterious phenomenon. *I was carried home through the air.* I have not the most shadowy recollection of walking upon the ground; nor had I, that very night, when—perfectly sensible and sober, as far as drink is concerned—I put my feet into the bed, wondering how I got there. There I was at home, and certainly in my bed, but I had reached it with no species of physical exertion, without the smallest muscular energy, with no thought of active locomotion. I could call to memory no roads which I had passed, no paths that I had traversed. Invisible spirits had taken charge of my body, whilst my mind was bewildered and lost in an ecstatic reverie.

I had passed the day in a fitful fever, but "I did *not* sleep well." I turned and tossed, dozed, and started up. If I slept, I dreamt. If I kept awake, I dreamt. Were my eyes open, the image of Emma was fixed upon the retina; were my eyes shut, that image was vivid and distinct. Now I slumbered, with a conviction that I was wide awake and active. Now I looked about me, satisfied that I was fast asleep and dreaming. A deep sleep of about two hours, by which I was overcome late in the morning, saved me, perhaps, from madness. It quieted me wonderfully, inducing, when I awoke, a decided reaction, that might have lasted, if I could have kept in bed for ever afterwards, or fixed my thoughts for ever in their present healthy tone. My bedroom opened into the sitting parlour. The door of the latter stood upon its hinges, and, as I lay on my pillow, my books, all so cosily arranged, looked in, and cast upon me a silent and reproachful look. Instinctively, and more in sorrow than in anger, I turned my back upon them; but my good genius bade me turn again, and I surveyed them with a spirit chastened by their friendly admonition. "Yes!" I mentally exclaimed, "this look is providential. I will regard it. Dear friends, you call me back to duty; I will obey the summons."

I rose, I dressed myself. I took my breakfast, and then spread my books and papers on the small reading table. I did not speak a word. The waiting servant-maid performed her work in silence, and seemed to feel that talking would not please me. It would now be difficult to describe the exact condition of my mind, if I were able to decide it. I know I was doggedly resolute—determined to read hard, and to permit no thought of *her* to rest upon my brain. I bit my lip, and frowned—deeming, perchance, personal severity to be needful for moral protection, and to secure fixity of purpose. Giving, in an austere voice, orders to deny me to all visitors, I locked the door, and thus, armed as it were to the teeth, I breathed more freely, and drew a chair to the table. For some minutes—it might be fifteen—I roamed over the printed page. I read it once, twice, thrice, again, again, and again, but I gathered no meaning—acquired no principles—imbibed no ideas. The words and syllables passed before my eyes as they might have passed before the painted orbs of a blind automaton. What triumph for the imps of darkness, if they stood by, and saw the arch-

fiend steal away the spirit, leaving the carcass there, intent and studious! What a yell of victory! Yes, there I sat, staring vacantly, doltishly, upon the book, innocent that my mind was loose again, unchained, and far away, revelling in the luscious beauty I had sworn never to approach again. Such a state could not last. The fluttering of the soul, its flitting here and there, its great tumultuous joy, at length disturbed and shook the fleshly tabernacle. A sudden shock wakened the clod to life and sensibility, and then hot, scalding tears poured in a torrent down the unconscious book.

The Rubicon was passed, the mask had fallen. The hours for study had gone by for ever. I would make the vain attempt no more. *I could not live without the sight of her.*

It was with no rash or passionate step I walked once more towards her dwelling. With deliberate choice I sought her now. I knew the danger and the error. I felt a punishment would come, and I could meet it cheerfully. Thus intoxicated by the fascination, falsely and wildly at ease, I made the plunge. No threat, no entreaty, no fear, no human power, could have held me back.

For the following month I was a daily visitor at Temple's cottage. The mornings were passed in her society. Whist was the usual occupation of the evening. I took no interest, had no pleasure, in the game; and the society of the men was heavy and oppressive. But my daily privilege was worth a greater sacrifice. The sums I lost—for I left the table always a loser—were, judged by my means, considerable; but I noticed the diminution of my funds with apathy, if not contentedly. My own little home had no attraction for me. I was wretched and restless if I sat in the quiet parlour for an instant. Every object, in one way or another, would attack my conscience. It was generally very late at night when I reached the farm-house, and then I went instantly to bed. No dark thoughts on these occasions rose to trouble or to check me. All was dazzling light. A sorcery bewitched me ever with a vision of the coming morrow. I anticipated the enjoyment again of her bright presence, and, in prefiguring that, I realised a present joy—a gush of pleasure—the more delicious and abiding because its fulness was yet incomplete. I rocked myself to sleep—not to forgetfulness—with blissful reminiscences of the winged day that had flown by. Her bashful smile crossed me in the darkness, as it had at noon. Her voice thrilled clearer in my ears. Her glossy ringlets danced more vividly before the shut-up lid. Once more we walked together in the garden-plot, whence, with her delicate white hand, she plucked the coloured flower that I hugged beneath my pillow. When I fell asleep at length, sleep only painted the reality—raising the true unto the beautiful ideal.

The excitement in which I lived caused me to be unobservant of a fact which, had I considered it at the time, must have called forth my wonder. Temple never spoke to me again on the subject of my reading, so anxious as he had been about it when he recommended me to rent the cottage. Our friendship warmed, our mutual confidence grew unlimited, our bearing ripened to affection; but we never recurred to the past, nor spoke of the future. More remarkable than this was his apparent ignorance of my state of mind. By no word or act did he once make it evident to me that he suspected the love which I bore for his fair relative. He did not remark the glaring neglect which I exhibited of everything but her and her proceedings. He stood by unconcerned and silent, whilst to a stranger's eye there must have risen testimony and proof irrefragable of the raging fire that was consuming me.

I had now known Emma Fitzjones three months. At the earliest moment of our interview, I had fallen beneath the aggression of her beauty.

My love grew in proportion to the quickness with which it was at first called forth. It increased by what it fed on. I had long ceased to be master of my actions—of myself. Absorbed in her existence, I had no happiness excluded from her presence, no *real* joy but in feasting on her charms. More than anything else, I desired to tell her so, to acquaint her with the strength and depth of my passion, and to implore her to requite my true affection—to exchange her maiden love for mine. Many opportunities I had to make this interesting communication; but I might have been dumb for any help my tongue afforded me. It would not budge. Every attempt I made to disburden my poor overloaded heart, threatened me with suffocation—the words stuck in my throat, so sure as I called them there for utterance. In this extremity, for the same reason that the blind man applies to his sense of touch, I invoked the assistance of my eyes, and eloquent I am sure they were, if they delivered half that my flurried soul conveyed to them. I hoped, believed, felt that I was understood. Still one syllable would have made assurance doubly sure, and, till it was spoken, I was virtually as much separated from my prize as on the evening when I caught the first half glimpse of it, ignorant and careless of the value of the treasure that had lighted on my path. Determined to make a confession, satisfied that I should be able to do no such thing—alternately courageous as a lion, and shy and fearful as a lamb—I one day planted myself in a narrow lane, through which I knew she must walk on her way to Chesterton.

It was a brisk, autumnal morning—bright, and love-inspiring. The neighbourhood of Cambridge, it must be confessed, has very little interest in the picturesque. Those mighty smallnesses, the Gog-magog excrescences, in spite of the pardonable and fond pride of the ambitious native, who would fain believe them mountains, look painfully ridiculous on the sensible horizon, as they rise there an inch or two higher than the broad and barren level. Green lanes are few, the sweet sequestered spots are none. The far-renowned Cam herself, save where she winds with unobtrusive and scholastic grace, ripply and clear, beside some grassy college plain—what is she but a slice of muddied Thames, cut on a windy day, and at its ugliest turn, and fixed between her own two aguish banks of dripping rushes? The sun, this fair autumnal morning, shone upon nature in her lowliest attire, and still my throbbing heart, tuned to sympathy by love, looked from within, and saw all things beautiful. With what a show of loveliness can the source of light, and the source of all human joy, deck and enliven the meanest spot of earth! It was a buoyant day—one that, as it passes, we would gladly cling to, or keep back—a cheerful and a cheering day. Ah! I have known many such, in seasons, too, of trial and of anguish, and they have stanched the tear, and eased the brain, and drawn with silken force the soul from evil thoughts to thoughts of kindliness and love. Ah! thrice blessed giver of light and warmth! Surely it was upon a ray of sunny light that the illuminated thought of immortality first streamed into the savage mind!

At an early hour I took up my position. I was sure that I should see her. She had not told me so; but a conviction, more satisfying than mere words, supported my belief—a conviction born of indistinct, impalpable declarations; a thousand evident nothings, from which I flattered myself not only into a certainty of our present meeting, but into a gratifying belief that I had already won her virgin young affections. I must have presented a strange spectacle to an attentive observer, had such a one been present. I was ashamed to be found by her *watching* for her appearance. I desired rather to suggest the idea that chance had brought us at the

same time to the spot. With this deliberate view, I marched to the extreme end of the lane, turned the angle of it, and took my body out of sight. With my head peeping round the corner, I marked the entrance into the street of every female figure. Did any one assume the most remote likeness to the lady I expected, in an instant I was out, advancing towards her with my quickest, busiest step. Many blue bonnets, and many grey pelisses, doomed me to disappointment, and sent me, drooping, back again. For two good hours had I been "a wakeful sentry, and on duty now," when a form, difficult indeed to be mistaken, tripped into the lane. Flushed and confused, I hurried from the point of observation, and staggered towards it—I was at Emma's side.

We stopped, we blushed, and spoke. I made a puerile remark, to which she gave some answer, and then moved gently on. I turned to go in such good company. Oh! she would not think of that—she could not take me back again. I was growing a sad inventor. With brazen audacity, albeit with a weak and faltering voice, I said that I was walking forward when the sight of her had stopped me in my progress. Did she suppose, I marvel, that I had eyes behind as well as eyes before?

How shall I narrate the whole of a conversation which was forgotten an hour after it took place, or which, more properly to speak, never was remembered? We walked on. For the first time I had possession of her arm. I held it at a modest distance, and scarcely felt its fairy weight. Proud as a monarch was I of my prize! As we proceeded, the sensible burden became distinct and undeniable, and my heart grew bolder. A tender pressure, hardly intended, conceived and executed like a flash, suspended me in keen and dreadful doubt. It did NOT offend. I gloried in triumphant love. Still we proceeded, and the arm I gathered in a closer fold, and constrained with gentlest might. We reached the water side. Upon the bank we strolled, silent and overpowered. Her arm had fallen, and our hands were clasped. Oh, for a word to speak, to utter, and relieve my full and parching throat! I raised the hand—that fair and milk-white hand—I kissed and seared it with my burning tears.

"Emma, Emma!" I cried, the awakened waterdrops still pouring down my boyish cheeks, "do you love me? Say you do! Let me hear you say it!"

Her head fell upon my shoulder, and the beautiful black hair, released from its imprisonment, flowed loosely to her shoulders. I kissed her coral lips. "Tell me, Emma, that you love me. Say that you would give up everything for me. I could die for you. I cannot live without you. Tell me, dearest Emma, could you be happy all your days with a poor clergyman for your partner? Oh, I could be steeped in poverty with you, and still be rich! Speak, speak, to me, dearest Emma!" She pressed my hand. I was answered, and was happy.

How, upon our road homeward, we chatted about flowers and birds, and every beauteous thing of life! How suddenly unreserved did we become! How very much she was pleased with objects that afforded me delight, and how interesting to me was every little matter that had a share in her esteem! How strange, how thrilling, how delicious, was this young excitement! How curious in its effects, especially in driving from my mind all thought of "honoured parents," and from the recollection of my Emma the little business that she had to do in Chesterton!

I had eaten nothing throughout the day. Before seeing Emma, I could as easily have committed murder as swallowed food. The thought of it was more than sufficient. The idea, however, lost much of its grossness when, in the evening, my appetite, no longer encumbered with the doubts

and anxieties, the fears and hopes, of an undeclared passion, asserted its natural and long-established claims. I ate heartily, and fortified the patient stomach with draughts of wine, that well repaid it for its previous fast. Stimulated to a high degree—my animal spirits within a hair of spoiling my better judgment—mercurial and bold, I sprang, at the close of dinner, from my own fireside, and flew to Temple's favourite cottage. I was engaged to take a hand at the eternal whist-table. The three visitors and Temple were assembled. They looked, all of them, awfully savage. Temple's gun, or eye, or hand, had failed him at a pigeon-match in the morning, and he and his backers had lost considerably. They were very spiteful, and recriminations and sour bandyings passed amongst them with a very faint reserve. My elation was all the stronger for the contrast. Mr. Roberts, one of the gentlemen, the most ill-natured of the lot, affected to believe that I was laughing because he was grave; and more than once, in addressing me, he bordered on the offensive and the personal. I was in no humour for quarrelling, and I laughed the more. When the men ceased to upbraid one another, and had talked their spleen clean out, they sat down to their usual game, but not with their usual grace. After two rubbers, I cut in. I was the opponent of Mr. Roberts, and on this occasion I had a wicked desire to beat him; not for the sake of his money—I had already parted freely with too much of my own to have any keen coveting for that—it was his obstinate peevishness that I thought to irritate, his discontented temper that I wished to gall. I was not prepared for the advantage of attack which he shortly offered. I played with more than ordinary attention, or, more properly to speak, I played *with* attention. I had never done so until this evening, nor should I now, if my existing relation with Emma had not put me entirely at ease. I marked the playing well. It was the lead of Roberts's partner. I studied my own hand closely; but in the very act, my eye was directed, I knew not by what incitement, to my adversary's movements. Judge my surprise when I beheld Roberts secretly displaying the front of his cards to his partner; and making signs with his fingers respecting them. He was as cool and collected as though he could not conceive the possibility of detection. He observed me, reversed the position of his cards, and said nothing. Fired by the wine, roused by the fraud, I placed my cards upon the table, and impeached him without hesitation.

"Roberts," I exclaimed, "you are a cheat! You have robbed me of every farthing that you have pretended to win."

Roberts turned pale; but asked me very quietly what I meant. Temple was astonished, and likewise called upon me for an explanation. I gave it, and he received the accusation with incredulity. He would not, he could not, believe it. I must be mistaken. I was excited. I had drunk too much wine; it had got the better of me. He had known Roberts for years; he was *honour* itself, and, more than that, was one of his—Temple's—dearest friends. I had made a great mistake, and must certainly apologise. I was sure that I had made no mistake, and I reiterated the charge more warmly, and with greater vehemence. The cards were thrown up, and we all rose from the table.

"Caleb," said Temple, "you are very much to blame. However, I shall not permit either of you to leave this room until the matter is cleared up. You have brought a serious charge against my friend. You are too hasty, and don't understand the usages of society. This is a shocking breach of good manners, and you must learn to behave better, or you'll get into trouble. I don't know what strange delusion you are labouring under; but I will take my oath that Roberts is as innocent of any desire to cheat you as I am. He must have been mad if he had been so barefaced."

"Mad, or rogue, Temple," I answered, nettled by the partiality which he exhibited for Roberts, "he did it, and I tell him so to his teeth."

"You are a liar!" replied the unreserved Roberts.

"I say this will not do," said Temple, interposing. "You shall not brawl here. Stukely, I request you at once to make an apology."

"*Honour itself*" sidled up to me, manifestly expecting my compliance.

"Temple, I can't, I won't. The apology, if apology could meet the case, should come from him. I will swear to the truth of what I assert, and I will not be bullied."

"Come, come, Stukely," said Temple seriously, "I shall not allow this language; we have been good friends, and I hope we shall remain so. Therefore, hold a rein upon your tongue. I never permit strong expressions, even in jest. It is difficult to draw a line when the bounds of propriety are broken down. You understand me?"

"Why do you persist, Temple, in believing his statement rather than mine?"

"Why do you persist in believing your own heated imagination in preference to your cool reason? Does it stand to *reason*, that before your very eyes he would commit himself? Now, Berry," he said, turning to Roberts's partner, "you are a gentleman." (Berry blushed.) "You would not submit to the disgrace of telling a lie. I appeal to you. You must have seen Roberts if he did this. I call upon you, in the name of our long friendship, to speak the truth. Is there any foundation for this charge? Answer me upon your honour as a gentleman."

Berry blushed again, but not so deeply as before. At last, without blushing at all, he replied—"Upon my honour as a gentleman, Mr. Stukely is quite in the wrong."

"There!" said Roberts, opening his eyes and elevating his eyebrows after the fashion of innocent and injured individuals.

"There!" echoed Temple, "what would you have more?"

Believing that I could not have less in the way of satisfaction, I took my hat, and, without another word, made my way to the door. Temple followed me.

"Stukely," said he, "you are not in a condition to be reasoned with to-night."

"Temple," I replied, "you are mistaken. I never was cooler in my life—never more sober. You will find me no easier to be dealt with, in regard to this business, to-morrow, or the next day, or this day twelvemonth. I could not be deceived. I saw Roberts communicating with Berry, with or without Berry's consent, for I hadn't time to fix *him*. I have always lost with Roberts; indeed, I have never won at your table—the reason why is now clear. Mind, I accuse no one but him. I have no right to do so; but he is a sneaking blackguard, and I will tell him so again. Do I talk as if I were drunk?"

"You certainly do not talk as though you were sober. You have spoken a word or two, Stukely, that I must call to your memory to-morrow. I am certain that you will be too glad to make every reparation for the insult you have offered, not only to Roberts, but, by implication, even to me. I will not take advantage of you now. I will speak to you after a night's sleep, and if you are then prepared to tell the same story, and to take the consequences, rest assured that no difficulty shall be put in your way. Good-night."

It was a frosty evening. There are some thoughts that protect the inner man from all external chills. Mine were not of that character. Even the prominent image of Emma receded before the contemplation of a duel, or

a set of duels, into which I beheld myself on the point of being trapped. It was no agreeable vista; but I saw no honourable way of escape, if the alternative were forced upon me. One thing was certain—I would be fooled no longer, whatever might be the consequence. If it were necessary to establish my position at the muzzle of a pistol, better to run the risk, better be shot at once, than have no peace of mind—than be made the butt and sport of every knave and trickster. Emma would love me surely not the less that I had asserted my manhood, and maintained its rights. Was it not due to her that there should be nothing contemptible and cowardly in the man whom she had honoured by her choice?

How quick is thought! Restless and mysterious operation! How it leaps from pole to pole, and touches in an instant all the various chords with which the human heart is strung—eliciting now celestial harmony, and now discordant jangling notes of earth! In a moment—oh, how well do I remember it!—I had reached my cottage gate—in a moment every high and lofty fancy was disturbed! My mother's look, as she beckoned me a last farewell, rose before my eyes, and started up a train of bitterest reflection. One true friend, to have whispered one true word, would have drawn me from the mesh that had entangled me. None was near, and I was left to the protection of a seduced conscience. Maddened by the conviction of my disloyalty, by the view of my true situation, which blazed for a brief interval before my reason, as if light from heaven had placed it there, the finest thread would have forced me back to peace and happiness—no saving hand might help me. I lived to learn that when we *will* betray ourselves we shall, and though the door of refuge stands gaping in our front, we rather turn aside, and, with deliberation, pass into perdition.

As I took my breakfast on the following morning, revolving in my mind the liabilities of the day, I was disturbed by the arrival of a visitor. A young lady entered my apartment at the same instant that a maid-servant announced her. It was Emma—in great trouble and distress. Her eyes, red from weeping, were still suffused with tears.

As soon as we were left together, I ran to her side.

"What is the matter?" I asked in great alarm.

"O, Mr. Stukely!" replied the lady, indulging in a fresh burst of tears, "what is it you have done? You have rendered me the most miserable of women. Why, oh why, did you call forth an interest in this aching heart, to surround and agitate it so soon with terror and alarm?"

"Dearest Miss Fitzjones, I implore you to compose yourself. I really don't know what you mean." Emma would not compose herself, and I was rendered very uncomfortable.

"Mr. Stukely," she continued, "do not disguise the matter. I have heard it all. You have quarrelled with Mr. Roberts, that desperate man, and he has challenged you, or is about to challenge you, to fight."

"Well, what can I do, Emma?" I replied. "If he challenges me, I suppose I must meet him. I don't know much about these affairs, but I believe that is the usual course."

"Do not talk so, Mr. Stukely. You wish to break my heart."

I seized her hand, and imprinted on it an ardent kiss, in order to assure her that I wished no such thing.

"Believe me, dearest, dearest Emma, I would lay down my life to serve you. Advise me in this business. What ought I to do? What shall I do to dry those tears, and make you happy?"

"Why did you quarrel with him?"

"Because the rascal cheated me."

"Are you sure of it? Is it impossible for you to have erred?"

"Ah! I see, Emma. Your cousin has told you that I am in the wrong. He did not behave well to me last night."

"Mr. Stukely," said Emma, colouring slightly—"do not, I beseech you, call Mr. Temple my cousin any longer."

"Has he ceased to deserve the title?" I enquired.

"Ah! Mr. Stukely, mine is a history that would move a heart of stone to pity. One day you may hear it. You may deem me then less worthy of your love—not less an object of your sympathy and compassion."

"Miss Fitzjones," I replied, moved by her melancholy tone, "I have read of such cases. I can partly guess your cause of sorrow. You have been left to the charge of your relative, and you have not experienced the brotherly affection which your dying parents looked for with confidence at his hands. Possibly he has dissipated your fortune, your little substance. Ah! Emma, you do not know me. You cannot know the intensity of my passion, if you deem that I shall love you the less because I take you penniless. The time may not be distant when a husband's love shall make amends for all."

"Let us change the subject," said Emma, drying her tears. "I wish to spare you from these men. Are you morally certain that there was ground last night for your suspicion?"

"I will swear it."

"And will you not retract your words?"

"No, Emma—not until you bid me."

"Then, dear Mr. Stukely, I do bid and entreat you. You must not run into this dreadful danger. You might have been—I do not say you were—mistaken. Is it right to sacrifice a life upon such a doubt? And a life will be sacrificed—for Roberts and all those men are deadly shots. If he were to kill you—if blood——"

The lady could not proceed. Her apprehension dissolved in tears—and her tears choked her utterance. She sobbed in my arms.

"Dearest maiden," I exclaimed, whilst I pressed her to my bosom, "let me be worthy of this noble heart!"

And then the door slammed open—and James Temple rushed in—his face pale, his lips frothy with rage.

He cried out, running up to me at the same time, with his fists clenched, "Accursed betrayer! Double, double villain!"

I held the furious man at arm's length, and Emma Fitzjones screamed out and fainted.

"What do you mean, Temple?" I asked in great affright.

"What!" answered he. What! do you ask me what? Look at the partner of your guilt. Is this your boasted friendship? This your honour? This your simple-mindedness? Oh! what an adder have I nourished in my bosom!"

"Temple, be not mistaken. It will be well with you if your conscience stands as free as mine is now in all that touches that young lady. Look into your heart. Ask it how it has performed the duties that your relationship, your tie of blood, imposed upon you? Whence do those tears flow but from your neglect—her cousin's cruelty?"

The lady recovered—raised herself from the chair—tottered across the room, and vanished.

"Why is she here, you smooth-faced hypocrite?"

"I am not bound to answer that. I am no hypocrite. In due time, I should have told you all. My purpose was honourable—I have no reason to blush for the feelings which I this moment entertain for your fair cousin."

"My fair COUSIN? Stukely, you have played your part naturally, and yet not well enough. You cannot impose upon me by this deep game. My fair cousin! Cousin! oh, most plausible villain!"

"Yes, cousin; is she not?"

"No man, Stukely, unless he were lost to all principle and manly feeling, would stoop to this behaviour. I ask you one question. Would you have me think you an ass, an idiot, a dolt, a fool? Are you a child in leading-strings? What are you? My *cousin!* Oh! you are very simple, or very keen."

"Is she not your cousin?"

"No!" roared Temple, in a voice of thunder.

"Why have you led me to believe, then, that she was? Why have you called her cousin?"

"No, Stukely, this will not do. It is very convenient to be thought a greenhorn at times; but you may presume upon your credit, and then the trick smells. A boy of twelve years would have no excuse for shutting his eyes against conviction. The fact stared you in the face. You have known—it is useless for you to deny it—you have had a hundred opportunities of remarking the delicate connexion that existed between that lady and myself. You have taken advantage of our intimacy to seduce her affections. You have poisoned her mind. You have violated the rights of hospitality. I received you as a friend and a brother—you have repaid me like a midnight assassin."

I was about to reply, but he stopped me.

"I want no explanation—no words. There are offences so black, so heinous, that no satisfaction can meet them. I ask no satisfaction. You are below my consideration. Had the lady been my wife I would have winged you. I will not now enable you to be called a gentleman by placing myself in the condition of your adversary. I repudiate and scorn you. Take the lady, and may she find in you a warm and faithful friend." He paused for a second, and then continued—

"One word more before I leave your hateful presence. I came on Roberts's business. After what has happened, I promise you that he will treat your paltry accusation with all the seriousness it merits. Both it and you he thoroughly despises. There is but one step more in baseness and depravity. Take it, and crown your villany. Desert and throw upon the world the poor and credulous object of your designs. You have ripened the seeds of corruption in her heart—laugh at her—turn her adrift—and let her reap the fruit in misery and prostitution."

Mr. Temple said no more. He departed: and I stood horrified and aghast. A cold perspiration hung about me, and the earth seemed rapidly to sink. I paced the room to save myself from falling.

I repeated his words—oh, what dreadful words to use to me! Surely, surely, I did not deserve them! I endeavoured to gather together all the past. I vowed, if I could discover anything to justify this terrible abuse, he should have the benefit of that discovery; and I would on my knees demand permission to explain away his false suspicions. If not, I felt I could not bear to live without some satisfaction for this tremendous insult.

"What opportunities have I had," I asked myself, "to notice this accursed connexion? None—no, not one." But I remembered, all at once, the smiles and half expressions which had escaped him when he mentioned Emma's name, or referred in an especial manner to his *cousin*. These hints, which I had invariably taken as flattering intimations of her regard for me, were evidently intended to warn me of her character. Other little matters—trifling, scarcely worth noticing—corroborated this idea as soon

as the idea was started—and I was carried to the verge of madness. I could not reproach Temple. I pitied him—and cursed myself. I had indeed been a child, a fool, an idiot, it was too true; but no villain—no betrayer. Blinded I had been by passion—ignorant beyond excuse; but I was free, thank God, from criminal attaint! In the broad day I could assert and prove my innocence. What should prevent me? Spurred by the consciousness of unstained integrity, I rushed from my dwelling to Temple's cottage. I reached it quickly—the desecrated temple—alas, how different did it look! Robbed of its beauty by some fell enchantment! My heart failed me as my trembling foot ascended the accustomed stair. Should she be there! I could not look upon her with an unkind eye—I could not meet her with an unblushing cheek! Stung and emboldened by Temple's hideous charge—I crushed my fears, and every thought of tenderness—and walked boldly on. I entered the apartment; and there alone, weeping bitterly, sat Emma. I glanced around for Temple, then hesitated—stopped. What should I do? She did not raise her eyes—she knew that I was present—her sobs grew louder. My heart pleaded wildly for the helpless woman, and I could not reason with that treacherous heart. It softened and subdued me. Oh, I loved her still—passionately, dearly loved her—loved as I could never love again!

"Emma," I said, "tell me, where is Temple?"

"Gone!" she replied, without moving. "Gone for ever!"

"What, left the university?"

"Yes," she answered—her eyes still fixed upon the earth.

"Emma," I exclaimed, with an instinct of alarm, "may God bless you, and forgive me. Farewell!"

I had summoned resolution to be virtuous. I departed. As I descended, I heard a loud and fearful woman's scream, and at the same time a heavy fall—I ran back with the greatest speed. The poor girl had fainted. I raised her from the ground—she breathed hard—and bled profusely from a wound she had received in falling. She was once more in my quivering arms!

PART IV.

FIRST LOVE.

Let wealth, let honour, wait the wedded dame,
August her deed, and sacred be her fame;
Before true passion all those views remove;
Fame, wealth, and honour! what are you to love?
* * * * * *
Oh, happy state! when souls each other draw,
When love is liberty, and nature, law.

POPE.

ONCE upon the inclined road of error, and there is no swiftness so tremendous as that with which we dash adown the plane, no insensibility so obstinate as that which fastens on us through the quick descent. The start once made, and there is neither stopping nor waking until the last

and lowest depth is sounded. Our natural fears and promptings become hushed with the first impetus, and we are lost to everything but the delusive tones of sin, which only cheat the senses and make our misery harmonious. Farewell all opportunities of escape—the strivings of conscience—the faithful whisperings of shame, which served us even as we stood trembling at the fatal point! Farewell the holy power of virtue, which made foul things look hideous, and good things lovely, and kept a guard about our hearts to welcome beauty and frighten off deformity! Farewell integrity—joy—rest—and happiness!

I commence this period of my history with the avowal that Emma Fitzjones became my acknowledged mistress—I, Caleb Stukely, that lady's acknowledged protector. I was conquered by her direct appeals and my own oblique notions of justice. Could I desert the unfortunate being who had become a castaway through my blindness and passionate importunity; who had gladly sacrificed home and subsistence when she responded to the ardent affection which I had poured into her womanish and sensitive heart? These questions, differently expressed perhaps, she asked wildly and imploringly, when, more than once, I tore myself in sad confusion and perplexity from her fascinating presence. Then the prophecy of Temple, that I should throw the erring Emma upon a cruel world, tingled in my ears, not the less dreadfully in consequence of a threat of self-destruction which she calmly uttered, and whose fulfilment she bade me instantly expect, if I deserted her. She clung to me, hung upon my arm, and, looking up, pierced me with her full black eye. I could not conceal from her that it was difficult to disobey the natural wishes of a young and beating heart. But then the guilt! Alas, alas! the sense of guilt was fee'd and bribed away almost before it rose against me. Emma accompanied me to the farm-house.

He who is delighted with "*small profits and quick returns*," will assuredly find his account in the pursuit of unlawful pleasure. We had lived together in our snug but guilty habitation for about twenty-four hours, when the immediate consequences of my rash step were brought boldly before us. It was evening; a cold and cheerless one. The snow was falling heavily without, and our chairs were drawn close to the comfortable fire. Bewildered as I was by the strangeness of my new character, I was yet proud of my possession. Her beautiful black eyes still dwelt upon me with a fond expression, and she smiled bewitchingly, as she patted my hand, now held confidently in her own. The susceptible mind ever contrasts the external inclemency with its own merciful enjoyments. The snow dropped in large flakes against the window, and I spoke with lively gratitude.

"How thankful we ought to be, dear Emma, for being housed on such a night as this! Many a poor deserving creature is without a roof to-night, to shelter him from the pelting snow! This cheerful fire, too! What a blessed thing it is, is it not?"

"It is indeed," said she, drawing her chair still nearer to mine, and snuggling very close.

"I never can look upon wintry weather, Emma, without a dread of losing all my friends. It is very strange, but it has always been so, and I cannot help it. I do not know how other persons feel, but on a dreary snowy day like this, I fairly tremble with the fear of being left at last desolate and friendless in the world. We seem to want more sympathy from one another when the elements become our enemies."

"But is it not the same in summer?"

"No, dear. Love abounds in summer. A thousand voices speak to us beneath a summer sky. All things cheer and animate us. In the midst

of so much life, I could live alone, at least I think so now, blithe, social, and contented, without one human friend."

"What! without one?" asked Emma, archly looking up, touching my cheek in playfulness.

"Did I say without one? I meant *with* one—one only, Emma."

But the tenderest dalliance, even on a winter's evening, and by a sea-coal fire, will not supply the place of tea. I rang the bell, and then we chatted on.

"And how do you like the cottage, Emma? You will make the old rooms look very pretty, will you not? How these neat flower-pots charmed me when I first saw them! Ah me!"

"Did you really like them?"

"Oh, exceedingly! You will teach me to make them, and I shall be an apt scholar." And then I pulled the bell again.

"You will find the people here, my dear Emma, most attentive and kind. Mrs. Bates is such a simple-minded, motherly person! It is quite an amusement to listen to her quaint manner. She will make you very happy, I am sure. We shall both be very happy—always—shall we not?"

"If you cease to love me, Caleb, shall I be happy then?"

"Oh, bless you, that can never be!" and I kissed her hand to convince her of the impossibility. "Do you believe, Emma, that lovers are born for one another, or that they come together by chance?"

"I believe that it is not possible to determine."

"It would be a great satisfaction, though, if we knew we couldn't help ourselves. Nobody could blame us then——"

Emma sighed, and trifled with the corners of her handkerchief. I stopped short, and pulled the bell again with great rapidity.

"Dear me! Why don't they answer?"

I was very soon answered. After a short interval I pulled the rope more violently than ever, and, whilst the bell was still sounding, Mrs. Bates herself walked in.

"Why, Mrs. Bates," said I, with a familiar smile, offered as a set-off to the clamorous ringing, "I thought you were all dead."

The expression of Mrs. Bates's countenance was anything but simple or maternal. She had evidently walked in wound up for mischief. I gathered as much at a glance. She stood at the door, and holding the handle for protection or support, there waited my commands with a frowning silence. I tried the soothing system.

"Won't you walk in, Mrs. Bates?"

"Mr. Stukely," replied the landlady without any further hesitation, "you will please to leave my house to-morrow morning. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you ought, you wicked man; for you *are* a man, and no gentleman, I can tell you."

I began to perspire again. Here was the old story. Everybody felt that he had a right to insult me. I was contemptible in the eyes of the lowest. Scarcely could I recover from one assault before another knocked me down again. There was no repose. What must Emma think? and what could I say in reply to this attack but——

"Mrs. Bates, you forget yourself."

"I wonder you don't blush, Mr. Stukely," continued the woman, "for treating a widow in this way. I have children of my own, sir."

"Yes, Mrs. Bates, I am aware of it—two very amiable little girls."

"And a pretty example you are setting them, too, by bringing that creature into the house! The owdacious, impudent hussy! Oh, you woman!"

"Mrs. Bates," I said, feeling very dry in the mouth, and getting flurried, "what do you mean by *woman?*"

"A pretty pair you are," proceeded the artless Mrs. Bates, "to ring a virtuous woman's bell in this fashion. Nobody answers it here, I can assure you. For twenty years I have let lodgings, and all that time I have trusted in the Lord, and never did such a thing as this happen to me. As true as I am here, if it didn't snow as it does, you should both of you pack this blessed night. It was well for you, ma'am, I wasn't at home yesterday when you arrived, for I would have slapped the door in your face, as sure as my name's Bates. You nasty sluts are the cause of half the misery in the world. I'd give something to know how many men you have brought to the dogs before you took up with this poor young man."

Emma raised herself from the chair, and her eyes flashed fire. She attempted to speak, but she sat down again, and fell a-weeping.

"Mrs. Bates," said I, ready to cry myself, "I'll thank you for my little bill."

"Ah, you may cry," she continued, still addressing Emma, "you are, all of you, ready enough to do that. It is I who ought to cry, to think that my house should be turned into a French caravansary! If I knew where your mother lived, as sure as your name's Stukely she should hear what kind of company you have taken to. This is the second and last night that either of you sleep under this roof, and if you don't think proper to budge, we'll see what they can do at your college to make you. Yes, you deceitful crying cretur, you sha'n't go on with none of your wickedness here. Why don't you go to service like an honest woman, and work for your bread as you ought?"

Emma shook her head, as it seemed to me, in agony.

"You needn't nod your dickey at me, ma'am. It would be much more becoming if you cut them flaunting curls off. But that wouldn't do for your victims, I reckon. It's all very fine for you to dress up and strut about in silks and satins, but you'll find nobody here to dance after your tail. My daughters are members of a congregation, and I should like to catch e'er a one of 'em demeaning themselves with a strumpet. Whatever you want to-night, you'll just get for yourselves, mind that, and the minute you have had your breakfast to-morrow, *march* is the word. Cry! Yes, cry yourself honest and virtuous, and you'll do yourself some good."

And so saying, Mrs. Bates walked off, slamming the door, and mumbling as she went about the uselessness of communicating with her any longer by means of the bell. I could say nothing to any good purpose, and therefore held my tongue. Emma rose, and drying her tears, said, in a convulsive whisper,

"Let us leave this house at once."

"No, no," I answered, "we can't to-night, dear Emma—it's out of the question. Wait patiently until to-morrow, and I'll easily get lodgings elsewhere. What could we do in such a night as this? Hark at the wind!"

"Do you hate me, Stukely?"

"Oh! Emma, don't madden me by asking the question. What a horrible person that Mrs. Bates is! How I have mistaken her character! Don't be unhappy, there's a dear creature. Think of something else. This is certainly very unfortunate. Dear me! But you must have your tea; that will refresh you." [I was about to ring the bell again.] "Oh, that's of no use! Stay. I'll go down-stairs myself;" and so I did. I proceeded to the kitchen, where sat Mistress Bates, the servant, and the two daughters, members of a congregation. I entered it unassumingly enough;

but the moment I appeared, Mrs. Bates, who was reading aloud to the rest, closed the book, turned her face to the fire, and her back upon me. The others followed her example. I walked like an outcast to the grate, took my kettle, and carried it into the parlour. I returned, got possession of a teaboard, filled it with the implements of tea, and departed as modestly as before. As I ascended the stairs my ear was arrested by the voice of Mrs. Bates. She had opened the book again. I caught her first words—"*And behold there met him a woman in the attire of an harlot, and subtle of heart.*" I waited for no more.

Cheerless and sad was the remainder of this evening. We referred little to Mrs. Bates, and not at all to the native eloquence which she had displayed; but the latter had left upon us both a miserable weight, difficult indeed to throw away. In battles of the tongue, what an advantage does virtue give the combatant, or the known want of it in his opponent. Weak in all other things, let him be strong in *this*, and wealth, honours, knowledge, worldly condition, all yield to him in the conflict. They bend, succumb, and bow in spite, and by the very power of the sign he carries in his front. How had this vulgar woman crushed and humbled us! How had she hurled us from our social seat into the depths beneath her, and how she spurned us as she trode us down! And what resistance could we make? What could we do, conscious of the loss of our best security? No longer erect, but crouching and trembling with the perception of our moral nakedness, what could we do but be ashamed, submit, and bear with blushes and in silence? True to my pitiful idiosyncrasy, in this instance, as in all others of the like nature, I was moved to sorrow and self-reproach, not so much on account of my delinquency as for the exposure and insult to which I had been so mercilessly subjected. This was the gnawing worm, compared with which the sin itself slept in my bosom harmless. Wretched as I felt, I tried hard to rouse Emma, and to draw her thoughts from the disagreeable event over which they still brooded—but with little success; and no wonder. The soul must be at rest itself before it can communicate true peace to others. The night grew more and more boisterous. The gusty wind came rushing and moaning, carrying in its teeth hail, rain, and sleet, which it flung against the casement, and then went howling onward. There was a grumbling in the chimney, and we sat silently listening to it, whilst our candles burned unsnuffed and dismally. The fire itself, that had blazed and scolded with a true English energy at the beginning of the evening, sickened at length, and would not be revived by any means. The foodful coals turned into poison—and destroyed it. And so closed upon us the first day of love's young dream!

Emma had indeed received a shock, but I pitied and loved her the more for the insults she had borne. She retired to rest, and it was long before she ceased to sob, and was able to forget in sleep the smarting wound that rankled in her heart. My own uneasy mind was too much agitated with the business of the coming morrow, to admit the entreaties of tired nature, or to wish for the deceitful and temporary repose that sleep could at the best afford. "Now that Emma rests," I thought, "is the time to scheme, to look resolutely at the approaching enemy, and to prepare against him. When we are turned out to-morrow, whither shall we go?" I had flattered Emma with the idea of obtaining lodgings in the morning without trouble or delay. In my cooler moments I felt how valueless was such a hope. The people in the town must receive us, if at all, in secret, and at their peril. Their ruin would be the consequence of a discovery. Why should they stake so much for me? It was absurd to ask it. Then, no doubt, they were all, like Mrs. Bates, strictly correct and pious, and would be

scandalised at conduct which circumstances had not only vindicated in my judgment, but had rendered absolutely magnanimous and worthy of commendation. My plan must be to fix myself, for a time at least, away from Cambridge, in some small town safe from university control, where possibly I might find a standard of morality less unpliant and severe than that which dogmatised at home. What should prevent this very needful step? Ah, here came down the thick and troublous clouds, shutting out the fair and purple distance! What could prevent it but one hard impediment, combining, swallowing up in one, all other hindrances—an awful want of WHEREWITHAL, that world's monster whom we struggle to possess, and, when possessed, so many struggle to cast off again—that sweet companion, whose melting look no mortal being can withstand, whose bright presence opens all avenues to pleasant places, and whose glitter reflects a lustre upon the dullest—that touchstone that tests the worth of women and of angels—that quintessence and elixir whose drops of virtue transform the beggar to a prince, the ignorant to the supremely wise, the vagabond and the despised to the welcomed and the well-beloved! This gigantic power I needed now, needed before I could progress an inch. I had parted so freely and carelessly with my cash in Temple's rooms, that notwithstanding my father's liberal supply, I was left, with my increased expenditure and the new claims upon my purse, almost penniless. If turned into the street—and could I flatter myself that we should not be?—I might, with care and pinching, provide for seven days' meat and drink—further than this I could not go. The oftener I revolved this serious predicament, which every passing hour rendered more alarming, the more nervous and thirsty did I become, the more stupid and puzzled as to the mode of extrication. Apply to my parents again I could not. I had already received a sum considerably in advance of my stipulated allowance. Had this not been the case, since my association with Emma all desire of communicating with my home had entirely vanished. At the beginning of our intimacy, my thoughts would wander thither in spite of every effort to control and keep them back; but very soon, with their own free-will, they ceased to feed upon a pasture so noxious and unkindly. What but bitterness could the contemplation of that once-cherished home now yield? I turned away from it, grateful perhaps that I could do so without a scruple or a pang. But what was to be done for money? At the end of one short week I must explain to Emma my poverty, my state of bankruptcy. I would perish rather than make the mortifying revelation. What, indeed, would she then think of the selfish upstart who had reduced her so rapidly from affluence to want! I planned and thought, and pondered and designed, and turned in bed and sighed, and drank great draughts of water to appease my fevered throat; but at the second hour of the morning, a rude and undigested heap of schemes floated along my brain only to annoy and plague me with their crude improbabilities. At last and suddenly a cold sweat and a giddiness came over me, such as I imagine the culprit may experience upon the eve of execution, when in the dark and lonely night he works himself to frenzy in the attempt to realise his horrible condition. What principality or power of darkness at this fearful moment brought to my view a face and form seen but twice before, and yet, once seen, never to be forgotten, I cannot tell. The occult relations of the invisible spirits of air with our poor senses, leave to us only facts to certify of their existence, no clue to trace them out. When every hope was gone, and every door seemed closed against me, when I sank sickened with the weight of thickening apprehensions—then, at this moment, did the acceptable and dirty face of Mr. Solomon Levy dance before my eyes, and bid me raise

my head and flee to him for succour. Oh! never had a clean face looked so touching and compassionate! Never had beauty borne so tender and so kind a brow! The mouth, it promised help as plain as mouth could speak. The eye, it winked in pity, as no eye but his could wink, and every wrinkle of that olive cheek twitched with spasmodic sympathy. I caught at the nocturnal vision with the wild clutching of a drowning man. I could not question the wisdom of the good Providence that had vouchsafed it for my consolation and support, and I vowed to profit by the visitation. Resolving to visit my ancient friend at the first convenient hour of day, and to put to trial the sincerity of his early protestations, by imploring his assistance, without an inkling of disappointment or suspicion of refusal—I dropped at once to sleep; so quickly and so easily are the turbulent waves and boisterous winds, whose fury threatened never to be chained and silenced, lulled and overcome.

I was an early riser in the morning, but Emma was up before me. I found her dressed for departure, and packing up her clothes. She was agitated in her work; every action showed her great anxiety, her desire to flit. Her quick and nervous movements told of the scourge that threatened at her back, and urged her forward. I prepared the breakfast apparatus as on the night before. I poured out the tea, and then bade Emma share our well-earned meal.

"No," she replied, trembling with ill-suppressed passion, "nothing here; not if my life depended on the crust! Let us begone."

"It is useless, my dearest Emma, until we have a place to go to. If we leave this now, we may wander about for the rest of the day."

"Better to wander through the world for ever than be housed with this unfeeling woman. I cannot stay."

"Nor shall you—but do taste a little food. If you will, I'll go directly and procure good comfortable rooms for you. Mrs. Bates will allow you to remain until I return, and you can then remove quietly at your leisure."

"Go then, I pray, at once. Stukely, I cannot eat," she added, as I put the loaf of bread before her. "Don't ask me, I implore you. Oh, if you love me, remove me from this house!"

She paced the room in great excitement, and I thought it expedient to depart without further reasoning. In truth I had much to do, and little time was there to spare. The morning was raw and cold. I drank off a glass of very strong brandy, (a healthy habit recommended and introduced by Temple,) and without delay proceeded on my errand. At the foot of the stairs I found Mrs. Bates sitting in expectation.

"Well," enquired that lady, "are you off?"

"Mrs. Bates," said I, actuated by a sudden thought, "you are, I think, a Christian?"

"I should say I am," answered the meek dame; "what then?"

"Is it the act of a Christian to cast her fellow-creatures into the street?"

"Come, none of that, sir; that's nothing to do with Christianity. Are you and your miss ready to go?"

"We are not."

"Very well, that's enough. Sarah," she bawled out, "bring here my bonnet and shawl."

"Stay, Mrs. Bates. I am this very moment going to procure apartments. I may meet with some at once, or I may have to seek them for an hour or two. All I ask of you is to give me this day clear, and I promise you before nightfall we will leave your house. I will not believe that you can deny me this one favour. The accommodation to me will be very great, and I cannot say how grateful I shall be for your kind permission."

(There was nobody present to witness my descent, and I could not possibly fall lower in the estimation of Mrs. Bates.)

"Never mind the bonnet and shawl, Sarah," cried the softened landlady, countermanding the previous order. "I'll show you," she continued, turning to me, "that I *am* a Christian. I'll give my consent to your stopping until dusk, but not a minute after—so now make as much haste as you can."

Without returning to inform Emma of the reprieve, I made the best of my way across the marshes into the damp and foggy town. Desirous above all other things to obtain a temporary loan from Mr. Levy, I hastened first to that good gentleman's abode, reserving other business until success with him should decide my future conduct.

Before I parted with Mr. Levy in the stage-coach which carried us in company to Cambridge, that worthy personage had favoured me with a pressing invitation to his house, giving me at the same time to understand that many grand advantages were likely to accrue to me from his acquaintance. Well do I remember his emphatic words: "Vy do I live, Mr. Shtukely, in this vorld of trouble?—only to oblige my friends." Many valuable commodities, he assured me, that had fallen into his possession by some mysterious agency, were offered to his chosen circle at prices just low enough to make them gifts, without causing the pain that is associated with a gift's acceptance. Wine, liqueurs, brandy, and tobacco, with an enlarged benevolence, he kept to cheer the jaded spirits of the over-worked and studious; and money, that source of so much evil, was valuable to him only when it might help the needy, or carry the inconsiderate but generous prodigal over some big and pressing difficulty. Hard to conceive, as my past experience had made so pure a character, still, in visiting Mr. Levy now, I was prepared to meet a man above the common herd. From Temple I had gathered something of his munificence and open-heartedness. Once or twice when Temple had imagined that my funds were low, and when I had lost an amount of some importance at his gaming-table, he would enlarge upon the liberality of his friend, and recommend me to apply to him for help, informing me that he had ever stood *his* friend in need, and that I might reckon on his good faith and secrecy. When I compared this nobleness of soul with his poor habitation, and especially with his own mean and foul exterior, I could not but be confounded with the contrast; yet proud of human nature, too, here offering for our imitation a spirit of good, a self-denying saint, renouncing for the benefit of mankind the commonest enjoyments of the world. Luckily I had never needed this good man's help; therefore, perhaps, I had never called upon him, but often had I passed his dwelling, once in the company of others, and on that occasion he was lolling at his door, negligently attired. Noticing my approach, he started back and disappeared, but soon returned again accompanied by a lady, somewhat ill-looking, and severely marked with small-pox. He smiled and nodded, and pointed to me with his little finger. "That's the dear boy," I heard him say—and as I passed at length his hospitable door, he threw upon me a fond expression of that lively eye, a probing look of love unutterable! Such was the man—such rather did I deem the man—whose heart I meant to touch, of whose good help I stood in direful need.

I stood before his house, a low, ill-shapen den, a cynic's cell, the cavern of misanthropy—any place but the abode of generous Timon. It was neither private house nor shop, yet both. A doorway and a single window of moderate dimensions were all that met the eye. In the latter nothing was exposed to view, or, if it were, you might not see it. Like the great

proprietor, it boasted of its dirt. Mud, dust, and filth were heaped upon it. A curtain made of green stuff, and hung with rings upon a bar, meant to secure the dwellers from the gaze of passers-by, impeuded uselessly, for the well-protected panes forestalled its office. The entrance was a dark and narrow passage, which (the street door standing open) scared you off, or, as the case might be, invited you within. In the present instance I went forward without more observation. At the extremity of the dim avenue, I groped my way a little to the right, until a door prevented further progress. At this I knocked involuntarily, for my foot struck against the boards before I knew that I had reached it. The door was opened instantly.

Many strange sights have I been privileged to see. Reader, behold the strangest.

In one corner of a crowded room stood Mr. Levy in dishabille. Faintly indeed have I described him in his best attire. How shall I paint him now! Levy, thou art gone, and numbered with thy fathers. Posterity can never do thee justice. Thy *manes* never may be appeased. Pardon me, thou noble piece of earth, that my pen limps and falters in thy delineation. Oh, for a quill of photographic power, to fix thee in thy evanescent passage, to rescue from the greedy throat of Time that form and face, that hair, that eye, that goodly but unclean array! Levy in dishabille! More I cannot say. In the lowest depth it was the deeper still—the dirty Levy dirtier yet—the spicy spiced! Before him was a Hebrew book; upon his forehead, exactly between his eyes, a small square piece of leather-covered wood (so it appeared to me), kept in its position by a leathern thong, which running through a loop was carried round the head and tied behind. His left arm was exposed. Around it some dozen times was strapped another thong, similar to that about his head. His coat was off; his vest unbuttoned; over the once white shirt he wore a curious-coloured garment, formed of two square pieces of blue cloth, one hanging down before his breast, the other to his back, and both attached by means of two long slips of tape connecting them. At the extremity of the four corners were long fringes of white worsted, fastened in small knots. The fringes in the front were in Mr. Levy's grasp when I walked in, and started with amazement at the novel spectacle. Let me stand stricken with surprise whilst the reader looks around him. There, by the hearth, over that pan of hissing oil, fork in hand, stands the ill-favoured lady that you wot of—she of the pitted face, no meaner person than the mistress of the house, Levy's wedded partner. Her cheek is scorched before the crackling fire, but her gown, tucked up and pinned, is safe from conflagration. See how she darts upon the thrice-divided sole, and with artistic stroke turns now the head, now the tail, and now the middle piece, dogging the boiling oil, and escaping with a bob so cleverly the scalding sputter. And there for twenty years hath stood, as regularly as Friday came, this indefatigable cook frying her fish, not to be devoured savoury and warm, as fish upon the sixth day falls into the pious stomach of the Romanist, but to be laid out with ceremonial care, in pride of parsley, and safely locked away till Sabbath morn—when, cold and crisp and unctuous, it comes forth to grease and mollify the Levite's heart, and haply entertain him with a fit of biliousness. Miss Esther Levy at the table sits, herself unwashed, washing her brother with a disinterestedness that the young urchin, cuffing and kicking, scarce appreciates. Rebecca, second born, is busy with a book, no doubt a pleasant one. You cannot see her face; but her head, a mass of spiral papers, rolls with impatience at the little Levy's struggling cries. There in a bed lie two, the youngest of the group, emerging out of

MR. LEVY AT HOME.

childhood—prattling innocents! Their time for cleansing has not yet arrived. How prettily do they beguile the time with that small pack of cards, playing at *all-fours* and *mariage*, three games for a half-penny, lisping at intervals a wee incipient execration as fortune changes, or as juggling fails. But, last of all, behold the father's pride, Levy's son and heir, his better self—his youthful Prince of Wales—on whom the parent's mantle must descend—in whom the father's brightest hopes are fixed. His body is twelve years old, his head a hundred. There is more knowledge of the human creature—of the impure gross part, that lies hidden in the soul's corrupted sink—written and engraved in that precocious cunning cheek, than twenty ordinary men can boast. His father's *pride?* oh, rather say his *fear*; for never did nature mould in human flesh a countenance so portentous! Mark him, as he sits apart from all his brethren, counting the clay marbles which he himself has made—brushing the metal buttons that he has raked up everywhere, and every one of which he means to sell anon amongst the little boys in school, to which he is daily sent, with great advantage to himself, and greater credit to his master. My sudden entrance caused a slight intermission in the various doings of this interesting family; but the beneficent head addressed me without delay, and the waters flowed again in their accustomed channels.

"Vell, Hannah, who'd a thought it, eh? This *is* a honour. But I always said he'd come at last. Sit down, my dear—I shall be done directly. Here's a shurprise!" And taking the book into his hand, he mumbled out some Hebrew words, then rubbed the fringes round his face, and finished by kissing them with fervour. I was embarrassed at the unaccountable behaviour. "Perhaps I am disturbing you," I said; "I'll call some other time, sir."

"Not at all," was his reply, "you don't disturb me in the least. I knows it all by heart. I'm only saying my prayers."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Yes, dat's all. How's Mr. Temples? Have you seen him lately?"

Before I answered, he was deep in the Hebrew book again. Now he counted quickly the straps upon his arm, and repeated a dozen cabalistic words or so with a loud and rapid voice. The little gamblers, in the meantime, quarrelled at their game, and sadly interfered with the sacred occupation: a *Christian's* patience couldn't have held out for ever.

"Vill you two be quiet there," the father cried at last, "or shall I come and make you? Hannah, vy the devil don't you take them cards avay?"

"Vot's the good?" answered Mrs. Levy from the fire; "you know as vell as I do, Sol, you'll give 'em back the minute after."

"Vill I?" said the husband, leaving his manual without further ceremony. "Then you'll see, my dear." Forthwith he rushed to the bedside, and snatched the cards from both the trembling children; then he bestowed a blow upon the head of each—which, as might be expected, set them roaring. Unaffected by their cries, the pious man returned to his devotions, and proceeded as before. His compliance with the law was evidently irksome. In a few minutes he stopped again.

"How long is it, Mr. Shtukely, since ve travelled in the stage-coach together?"

"About eighteen months, sir."

"Ah!" sighed the old gentleman, "how fast the vurld goes!"—which serious observation no doubt recalled him to his duty—for he seized the book again, and lost himself for a few minutes longer. But the morning was inauspicious. He was doomed to interruption. Miss Esther, be it known, was worn out at length by the unpolished sample of Mosaic that

she was brightening up. Like the living block from which he was cut off, he was the slave of hydrophobia—he would *not* be washed.

"Father," said Esther, in a tone of real despair, "I wish you'd speak to Aby. I can't do nothink with him. He has fit me till I'm sick."

"You, sir," bawled out the harassed parent, "do you vant a licking the first thing this morning?"

"No," answered the boy, in as irreverent a voice as ever filial throat cast up.

"Then don't wex me, my boy, or you'll catch it at once."

And he did "*catch it at once.*" I was still looking intently upon Mr. Levy's curious trappings, when a loud blow, followed by a louder scream, compelled my attention elsewhere.

"Vot's the matter now?" shouted Mr. Levy, almost beside himself.

"That sarves you right!" exclaimed his good lady, addressing the juvenile above referred to, now lying at her feet kicking furiously. "I caught you, did I? My back isn't turned a minute before the villain has picked off every bit of brown in the dish. You won't maul the fish, my dear, again in a hurry."

All the family seemed horror-struck at the unholy pilfering, but Mr. Levy himself was choked with just rage. "If you don't take avay the rascal's share to-morrow morning, Hannah, you and I shall quarrel. Dat boy, Mr. Shtukely," continued he, still neglecting his orisons, "dat boy, sir, vill come to the gallows, if his mother and I don't live to see it. He has got a nateral idea of shtealing that breaks my heart to think of. He's booked for Newgate, though I say it:"—and Mr. Levy, with a heavy sigh, pursued his prayers, and did not speak again on worldly topics till he brought them to a close. Once more in ecstasy he wiped his visage with the fringes, and kissed them passionately; and, last of all, he turned his face towards the wall, bowed to it with reverence repeatedly, and beat his breast with force and sound that would have pleased a stethoscopist's ear.

"You have nothing to say pertikler, I suppose?" asked Mr. Levy, taking from his head and arm the leathern straps.

"A few words, if you please," I answered nervously.

"Oh, sartinly, my dear! Ikey, undo the shutters."

Ikey, the eldest boy, reserved and silent hitherto, furbishing his buttons, looked hard at me, and left the room without a word.

"Ve'll follow, if you please," said Levy shortly afterwards; "it's up the vone pair stairs."

"Vot do you think of Ikey?" asked the fond father, as we searched our way in darkness up the staircase.

"He's a very quiet boy, sir."

"Ah, a deep un! Just vot I should have been at his age vith a eddication! I meant to have named him after me, if it hadn't been 'gainst the religions. Vill you believe, I wouldn't mind dropping Ikey this blessed minute in the streets of Turkey! He'd make his fortune anyvherea."

We reached the *sanctum*, a small and really elegantly-furnished room. From the centre was suspended a pretty silvered chandelier—a Sabbath lamp, as Mr. Levy termed it. Young Ikey had ensconced himself at the table, and showed no symptoms of departure.

"And now," said Mr. Levy, placing on his nose a pair of iron spectacles, "vot is it you vant, my dear? You don't happen to be out of vine? I've got some port—oh!" (and he smacked his lips and swung his head, to express a praise too huge for utterance). "Dat isn't good port at all, Ikey, is it? Vot did it cost?"

"Fifty-nine and six," answered the boy-man immediately.

"And vot do I sell it for?"

"Sixty," said he, just as readily.

"I came, sir," said I, rather confounded as the time for explanation approached, "to solicit your aid in a different way. The truth is, I have overdrawn my allowance from home, and I require a little help to carry me over the quarter. If you will be good enough to advance me a loan—say for three months—I shall feel deeply indebted to you, and but too glad to show, to the extent of my power, my gratitude for such obligation." This was only a portion of the speech that I had prepared upon the road. The rest of it, the ornamental and best part, I could not get out. The small Levy turned up his knowing eye as soon as he heard the word *loan*, and planted it steadily upon me, to my very great shame and annoyance. The father was silent a while.

"How much might you vant, Mr. Shtukely?" asked the old man, after his musing.

"What's the use of your asking?" shrieked the young monster. "You know, father, you haven't a shilling in the house, and there are those three bills that were returned the other day."

No medicine could have caused the awful abdominal pain that was brought on by this sudden announcement. Oh, what would become of poor Emma, sitting expectant at home, ready to be turned out of doors? What would become of me and my projects? I felt the blood leaving my cheek. Levy perceived it, and he was instantly touched by the sight.

"Vell, for all that, Ikey," he added, "ve must see vot ve can do. If I ain't got money myself, I dare say I've got a friend vill help us at a pinch. But, my dear," continued he, "vot have you been doing to get into this mess? It's alvays the vay. Nobody comes to Levy till he's kicked to him. You know vot I said in the coach. You should come to me before—and I vould have been a friend and a father."

"I wish I had, sir!"

"Vell, that's gone by, and it's no good fretting about that. How much do you vant?"

"How much can you spare, sir?"

"Shpare!" exclaimed Mr. Levy, returning the question. "Ikey, give me my bill-book." Isaac took from his pocket a bunch of keys—selected one—opened the table drawer—examined a book—closed the drawer—locked it up—put the keys in his pocket, and resumed his former position, in about the tenth of the time that I have taken to tell of it. He was the quickest and yet most methodical little imp in existence. "There," resumed the older head, pointing with his small finger to a mass of names and figures, whose connexion I neither could nor cared to comprehend. "There you see. *At three months ninety-four pounds accepted by Lord Velvetcap, due September 6th, noted, returned.* Look here, too, wetting his finger, and leaving a large smut on a leaf as he turned it over, "same day *sixty-eight pounds ten, accepted by Smallwood, payable at Tinpenny's, no orders, returned*; and *Thomas*, the day after, *fifty pounds two.* Vot do you think a man has to shpare when he's upset in this way? Ikey tould you the truth. I have nothing at all; but tell me pretty near vot you vant; then I'll see the friend that I mean, and let you know in the course of an hour."

"Do you think you might manage a hundred pounds for me, sir?"

Levy jumped. "Vy, vot the deuce have you been about to vant sich a sum all at vonce? I von't deceive you, my dear; I don't think I can manage nothink of the kind."

I showed signs of uneasiness, and walked about in a state of commotion.

"My dear boy," he continued, "it's no use being nervous. Dat von't get you the money."

I was in great distress—wrought to intolerable mental torture, as I reflected on my situation. "Oh, this is terrible!" I exclaimed (to myself, as I thought).

"Yes, my dear," said Mr. Levy, in a tone of passive acquiescence; "ve know it's always terrible ven ve vant cash and can't get it; and you seem to vant it raythor bad too just now."

"Indeed, indeed, I do, sir. If you can help me in any way, I implore you to do so. I must borrow the money of somebody."

"You must, must you?" said the old man looking at Ikey, who was looking at him. "Very vell, you had better take a valk in the cool for a little, vile I run to my friend. I'll be back between this and ten."

"Oh, sir, I can never sufficiently thank you!"

"Vell, never mind now. You've nothink to thank me for yet; and vot's more, I can't promise you much. Go and valk for an hour, and then come and see me again."

I departed from the singular abode in an overwhelming state of anxiety and dread. What could I do during this hour of fearful suspense? I couldn't return to Emma until I was furnished with money, or at least had procured lodgings for our temporary sojourn. Oh! I was very wretched as I walked one street after another, looking at my watch at intervals of five minutes, astounded and hurt at the sluggish pace with which its hands crawled on. A nasty irritating rain, too, came drizzling down, taking a mean advantage of my misery, beating in my face, and spitting in my eyes, whichever way I turned. How cordially, when they please, can the elements adapt themselves to our internal circumstances! Twenty minutes, like minutes sauntering on a holiday—twenty lazy minutes had elapsed, when "*Lodgings to let,*" hanging on a polished knocker, stopped me in a quiet narrow thoroughfare. What better could I do than try my fortune here? I gave a modest gentlemanly knock, and smiled most courteously upon the ancient lady, who came "when I did call for her." Nothing could be more assuring than the curtsy she yielded in return—deceitful promise, realising nothing! A dozen houses did I visit afterwards, a dozen times was expectation balked. The truth could not be hidden, and it was wise to look at it complacently. Money must be got, and for the present we must leave the town. I watched the latest second of the hour expire, and then rushed back to Levy's. Father and son were sitting in the same well-furnished room. My judge and jury both were there. I came for sentence; trembling and like a criminal did I await it.

"Ah, Mr. Shtukely!" commenced the elder, with an ill-omened shrug, "this is a most unpleasant business."

Death was the verdict, and I drooped immediately.

"Tell me, couldn't you vait a month—three veeks, for the money?"

"Indeed I cannot, sir."

"It's impossible, eh?"

"Quite, oh quite."

"You are positive of that? You are sure you von't alter your mind directly, and say you can put it off for a bit?"

I shook my head. I was arriving fast at desperation.

"Vell, you see this is a thousand pities, 'cause, in a month's time, I could lend you the money myself vithout fee or revard, and it vould be a treat to oblige you; but if you von't vait, I can't help it."

"Have you seen your friend, sir?"

"Yes, my dear; but you know vot friends are ven you put your nose

into their pockets. He has got the stuff; but he doesn't like to part vith it. Now, listen to me. You know your own business of course; but take my advice, don't borrow the money at all. If you are determined, in shpite, I'll just tell you vot my friend vishes, and then you can do as you please. In the first place, you must know he has entrusted the money to me, and here it is if you come to his terms."

Oh, refreshing spectacle! Oh, luminous coruscations! Fifty guineas, at least, did Mr. Levy draw with one grasp from his pocket, and scatter on the table. Water to a thirsty soul upon the plains of Araby—what is it to golden guineas glittering before the straining eyes of gaunt necessity? A mountain tumbled from my breast as I surveyed the precious coin. With a smirking grace I waited Mr. Levy's further explanation.

"His terms is this—but mind, I varn you, do vithout him if you can:—He'll lend you *now, this minute*, the money you desire; dat is, a hundred pounds. Seventy in these bright goolden guineas, and thirty in the finest port that ever vas. He'll charge you five per cent., 'cause that's the law, and then a something for commission. You'll give your bill at three months for the sum, and make over to him, for security, your furniture, and books, and vatch. Now, there you've got it—dat's the most he'll do. As for myself, you're velcome to my services. I shall make no charge for them. If you like to give Ikey a trifle for hisself, I shall make no objections."

Ignorant of the forms of business, I requested Mr. Levy to repeat this complicated history. I understood it by degrees, and saw at length, in full, the grievous sacrifice I was called upon to make. I stood still and hesitated.

"The vine, you know," said Levy, "is as good as money, for you must have *that*. Shtill take my advice, and let him keep his guineas to hisself."

"It is a horrible alternative," thought I, still undecided.

"And now, my dear," continued Mr. Levy, "I have just a vurd to say upon my own account. You must settle this business von vay or the other. I have thirty mile to travel this pleasant morning, and I shan't be back again for a day or two."

"You don't mean it, sir?" I said, wofully alarmed to see him walking from the room.

"Vot I say, my dear, I alvays means; that's the beauty of my character. Ikey, fetch my hat. I am very sorry to leave you, but go I must. Good-bye. God bless you. Think over his proposition; don't be in any hurry, and give me your answer ven I return. If you ask *me*, I say, don't take the money—that's the best."

"Do you think your friend, sir, couldn't be persuaded——"

"Not to-day, my dear. P'r'aps ven I comes back."

Mr. Levy was already on the stairs. In another minute he would disappear, and then should I be without hope of succour. My unfortunate and critical position—my wants—poor Emma—no lodgings—no home—all this, and much more uncircumscribed misery, crowded upon my mind, and incited me to yield to the demand: at the same time I was frightened and shocked by the ruinous transaction, and I held back and fluctuated. At length I heard a footstep in the passage. I leaped to the window, and saw Levy depart from the house, and walk slowly on. Shaking with agitation, conquered, hardly conscious of my acts, I knocked with violence and quickly upon the glass, and beckoned the old man back. He returned, and with tears in my eyes, and scarlet shame written upon my conscience,

I consented to the terms, and expressed my willingness to perform immediately my part of them.

"Vell then," said Levy, "let's lose no time. I have wasted half a day already. I shall be nicely out of pocket by the business. Ikey, vot's the stamp? Three months, a hundred?"

"Four and six," replied the devilkin with his hideous sprightliness, "and twopence for the paper."

"Give him five shillings, and tell him to keep the ha'pence," whispered the father confidentially, touching me familiarly with his elbow.

I complied with this suggestion. The stamp was brought, the note drawn out, and I taught by old Levy to accept it. A memorandum was then written by the ready Ikey, and signed by me, certifying that all goods and chattels then in Cambridge and in my possession were, until payment of the bill, not my property, but that of the blank gentleman who had advanced the loan. In consideration of my not removing them from college, he graciously permitted me the usufruct. Mr. Levy undertook to see the wine safely deposited at my present lodging; and the charge likewise of my gold hunting-watch—my poor dear mother's gift—how could I yield it so remorselessly? and having given this to the boy to lock away, he handed to me what he called "a statement of the job," and with it sixty pounds, "the balance (!) of the bill."

If, instead of securing sixty guineas in this disgraceful manner, I had *earned* six hundred honestly, I could not have skipped away from Levy's door with greater speed and glee. Strange compound is the human animal, acting so variously from the selfsame motives! Had I been sane, not steeped in folly to the very ears, this miserable gold, wretchedly acquired, pressing like lead upon my spirits, would have crushed them with its guilty burden. Now, it elated me, and puffed me up with flatulent unmeaning joy. "Symptoms," says the millesimal homœopathist, "in the disordered body, are *removed* by causes *producing* them in the healthy one." Is it not so in fact with the diseased infatuated *mind?* I neither reflected on the past, nor flung one glance upon the future. With the means of present enjoyment I flew to Emma, and released her from her sad imprisonment.

At eleven o'clock at night, Emma and I, our luggage and our wine, drove through the streets of *Huntingdon*. Upon the following morning I left the inn at which we had passed the night, and endeavoured to search out a home. Aided by a lie, I succeeded without difficulty. Emma was introduced as Mrs. Stukely to the lady who received us. The latter was very young, recently a widow, and the mother of a lovely girl, perhaps three years of age. Her husband had been an officer in the Company's service; he had fallen in battle, fighting for his company and his bread, gloriously in India.

The tranquillity of a day or two brought back the healthy tint to Emma's cheek, and restored her wonted gaiety. She forgot her previous affliction, and I remembered nothing but her adored and beauteous presence. In our apartment was a pianoforte. She taught me soon the assuaging, humanizing power of music—poetry in sounds! Her taste was exquisite, and the feeling with which she executed the most plaintive airs awakened in my soul vehement emotions, undreamt-of capabilities of delight. Her clear voice accompanied the penetrating tones, and to their undefined wild intimations would associate and conjoin soft images that through the understanding reached the heart, and melted it with pity. Consummate bliss! riveted to her side, and every nerve vibrating

with the touching sounds, what could the world afford to enhance felicity —what could it snatch away to ruffle it?

"Caleb," said Emma to me, having just concluded a short affecting song, and still sitting at the piano (it was the fourth evening after our arrival), "Caleb, there is a little air, a favourite of my poor mother's; you must hear that, if I have heart to sing it. She instructed me in the words before I could understand their meaning—when I could scarcely utter them."

"Is your mother living now, dearest?"

"Oh, no," said Emma, in a melancholy voice; "she has been dead some years, poor sufferer!"

"Was she a kind, affectionate mother?" I enquired, rather startled as I found myself entering upon such tender ground. "Did you love her dearly?"

Emma burst into a flood of tears.

"Don't be unhappy, dearest Emma. I cannot bear to see you weep; you quite unman me. Forget the past. My love shall make amends for hers."

"You are very good and tender to me, Caleb. A mother's love is unapproachable. I thought I loved her much whilst she was with me; but I never knew my need of her till they closed her in the grave." She spoke with passion, and again she wept.

There was *a living* mother also. Was one thought of her suggested by this weeping girl? And did the cruel wrong inflicted on that mother's absent heart touch me with contrition and alarm? We shall see.

Emma ceased crying. Throwing her smooth and shining tresses from her forehead, she swept her fingers quickly along the keys, and with thrilling strains gradually subdued her soul.

"Now, Caleb, listen to my dear mother's song." She sang as follows:—

THE MOTHER'S GRAVE.

"The days are past, the early days
Of innocence and joy,
When tears would fill a mother's eye
With gazing on her boy;
Tears that from the soul would rise,
Yet not for present sorrow;
For when she wept, her loving eye
Was trembling for the morrow.

My mother sleeps; her grave is green,
The aged grass is high,
And every blade when I approach
Is quivering with a sigh.
Then piously I do believe
That, where that grass grows wild,
My blessed mother's sainted soul
Is gazing on her child."

"Hark!" exclaimed Emma, as she concluded, "some one knocks." I opened the door, and admitted the little girl belonging to the landlady.

"If you please," lisped the fair child, "mamma sends up her compliments, and will you go down-stairs to tea?"

"Do you mean me, dear Ann?" said I.

"No. Both of you. Mrs. Stukely too."

"Are you sure of this?"

"Oh, yes! do come," she continued, pulling me by the coat, "or else mamma will cry. Come, Mrs. Stukely; tea is quite ready."

A more formal invitation was addressed to us a few minutes afterwards by Mrs. Springdale herself, who followed her daughter into the room. We readily accepted it, and were soon seated in her warm and hospitable parlour. Everything was very snug. A bright copper kettle panted and fumed away upon the fire, speaking its honest welcome as plain as steam could pour it forth; toast and tea-cakes were heating on a footman; a plate of bread and butter thinly cut for company was on the table; candles burned brightly in shining candlesticks; tea-pot and cups looked conversable and clean; and the whole economy and tendency of the room most persuasive and alluring! A quiet, cheerful, comfortable home! Ah, me! how much of life's true substance thou comprisest!

"This arm-chair is for you, Mr. Stukely," said the gentle Mrs. Springdale; "I have put it near the fire on purpose. Mrs. Stukely and I will chat together at the table."

("Here's a difference," thought I, "to that abominable Mrs. Bates.")

"Then, Anny," said I aloud, turning to the child, "you must sit upon my knee. Come and tell me all the news."

And in this affectionate style did we progress until the tea was over, and the things were carried off. Then we all drew our chairs around the love-dispensing fire, and for a season interchanged sweet and familiar talk. Mrs. Springdale, with a sober sadness, communicated her short marriage history. "Mr. Springdale was so heroic, and so high a spirit. He had been educated for a surgeon, but his ardent nature was cabined and confined in this employment. An opportunity offered to go abroad. He accepted it, and left his wife and child. He had scarcely landed before he was called to action. His daring and impetuous temper led him to the thickest of the fight. He fell, covered with wounds. It was a dreadful death. Away from every friend—without a moment to offer up one prayer to Heaven! Oh, it was very shocking! But he died in a noble cause—he fell for his country, that was a great consolation to his widowed wife, as it would be to his fatherless child when she grew up." And all this Mrs. Springdale uttered in a very serious tone, but without extorting one tear from her eye.

Emma's notice had been attracted many times during the evening by a small picture which, in an old wooden frame, was suspended in the centre of one side of the apartment. I followed her eye as often as she glanced towards it, but I could perceive nothing in the painting to merit such repeated observation. She at length addressed our hostess on the subject. "Is that the representation of a church, Mrs. Springdale?" she enquired carelessly, as she imagined.

"Yes," replied that lady, with a kind of half sigh. "You are surprised that I keep so unprepossessing a picture hanging there by itself? I don't wonder at it; yet I wouldn't part with it, dirty and old as it is, for the finest painting in the world. There are eight years of my life during which I cannot recollect that there sprung up one painful hour. It was all happiness. Eight years not embittered by one heart-rending or gloomy reflection are something to boast of. That painting is a memorial of them. Within a hundred yards of that church, the eight delicious years were passed."

"Where was it, may I ask?" said Emma, with increased interest.

"Were you ever in Kent?" inquired Mrs. Springdale.

Yes," answered Emma, the colour gradually leaving her cheek.

"Well, that's the parish church of ——, in the county of Kent."

Emma turned deadly pale.

Mrs. Springdale did not remark it, and continued—"Until I was eight years old, I lived in the little house that you see painted there in the background." Both ladies rose to view the picture more closely, and I followed them. "Up this long walk, and through the stile, did I regularly, Sunday after Sunday, for five years, trip to the church, sometimes with my mother, and sometimes with the maid, but oftenest with the good old clerk, whose company I loved better than that of either. Do you observe this tree, the old oak?"

"Yes," cried Emma, interrupting her, and trembling with suppressed emotion, "Marian's oak, as they called it."

"Why, bless my soul, you know it, you have been there!" exclaimed Mrs. Springdale, starting round, and in the action upsetting the candle which I held in my hand. "How very strange!"

"I spent some months in the neighbourhood," replied Emma, struggling to collect herself, "and often visited this lovely spot."

"But did you ever visit the church?"

"Often, very often."

"Well, how strange!" repeated the astonished lady. "I wonder I didn't see you! I have been to the place, once or twice, since I first left it. The last time I was there was the very year that the new clergyman came, that tall, glum-looking parson, who frightened everybody out of his wits. Oh, wasn't he a stern man! I never could bear him. I wonder what has become of him, and of that meek-looking inoffensive woman his wife?"

I watched Emma throughout this singular scene, and now I saw her eyelid quiver as though a knife were on it. She was still mistress of herself.

"Marian's oak!" she repeated, in a mournful tone. "How well I recollect the stately tree!"

"Yes, and so do I the hard seat round the hollow trunk."

"And old Adam, too," added Emma with spirit and fervour, drowning the melancholy thoughts, whatever they might be, which this picture had conjured up, in a brighter and a happier recollection, "the good old clerk you speak of, Mrs. Springdale; dear old Adam, attaching himself to the helpless and the young, making the little inhabitants his peculiar charge, and keeping them together like a flock, when they would otherwise have gone astray. He was a brave old man. How he would gather them about that tree, and tell them stories of his own distant boyhood, and teach them games long forgotten and out of date. His *was* a second childhood, a sound and healthy one, and spent in cheerfulness and love with children, as it should be."

"Well," I exclaimed, joining in, "I do call this the most delightful occurrence possible. How very remarkable that you and Mrs. Springdale should have been at this place together! If one were to read of this, we shouldn't believe it."

"You must come to me very often, Mrs. Stukely," said our hostess, "and we will talk over old times and scenes that are so interesting to us both."

"Yes," rejoined I, "and you must find your way up-stairs, and take tea with us too."

"Most happy," replied Mrs. Springdale. "We must become now very good friends."

"Emma," said I, when we were again alone, "that Mrs. Springdale is

a most charming person. How lucky we are to have encountered her. You will become very intimate, and our time will pass as pleasantly as possible."

"For your sake, dear Caleb," answered Emma, "I am truly glad of our good fortune. With this kind woman I shall find a home, whilst you pursue your studies still in Cambridge."

"What, dear?"

"Yes, Caleb, in Cambridge. Has it not occurred to you that this is your natural, most immediate duty? I am proud of your true affection, grateful for your protection. Shunned and despised by all the world, expelled, disgraced, I cannot forget how much I owe you. I should forget it if I sacrificed your interest and happiness for ever." She paused. "Stukely," she proceeded, "you saw that picture, that church. It is no common accident that brought it this night before my eyes. I looked at it, and almost forgot how vile a thing I am. I was once innocent, beloved, esteemed. The natural direction of this heart was virtuous. Why its course was turned aside, Heaven knows, not I; Heaven, who has accumulated in one poor soul the sin and punishment of generations. I will not be so selfish as to keep you here. You must return to college, and reside there during term. With Mrs. Springdale I shall be happy, as happy as I can be when you are away; and writing often to each other will diminish the pain of separation."

"You are a noble girl, dear Emma," I replied, "and——we will talk over this to-morrow. It is a great comfort to have so desirable a companion, and I pray that you may now enjoy a little repose and peace."

"I trust we may!"

Yes, but repose and peace, like other articles in great demand, are not so easy of attainment. They who have earned them (if any earn them) by lawful means, and intrepid perseverance, are seldom gratified with more than the consciousness of having merited a recompense reserved for angels. What the easily satisfied world regards as the repose of *Error* and the peace of *Guilt*, are but the false coin of hell, with which the fiend bribes us for an hour to forgetfulness and self-neglect.

About a week after this very satisfactory tea-party—and our intimacy had advanced in geometrical progression ever since—I was met at the street-door by an individual whose face was as familiar to me as my own, but when, how, and where I had made its acquaintance, I could not at the moment determine Not so the Face. It was a bluff and an impudent one, and recognised me intuitively. It grinned and nodded, "Morning, Master Stukely. How's the young 'ooman?" Horror! It was Mrs. Bates's brother! And he bounced without ceremony into Mrs. Springdale's parlour! What could he, a market-gardener, want there? What new threatening was this? "Emma mustn't hear of it for all the world!" I exclaimed, gasping with the dread of an impending storm. Our landlady was engaged "to tea" with us this very evening. "I am glad of that," said I, with a weak attempt at consolation, "for if the lightning is to fall, better to come at once than be flaming overhead." Emma had made extensive preparations for her visitor. The finest gunpowder had been bought for the occasion. The tea-cakes had been browned and buttered to a charm. She was about to begin the toast, when a message arrived from Mrs. Springdale, "Who was very sorry that she couldn't come to tea; she was very poorly, and had gone to bed."

"Poor dear!" ejaculated the unconscious Emma. "How very unfortunate. Give my love," she said, turning to the messenger, "and tell Mrs. Springdale that I'll see her in the morning."

"Will you?" thought I, nearly dropping from the chair.

Emma rose an hour earlier than usual to pay the promised visit; but she did not see the patient, "who was not yet awake, and must not be disturbed."

"It was very thoughtless of me to go down so early," said Emma; "she will be better after a sound sleep. A slight cold, no doubt?"

"I should say so."

"It is very sudden, though. She did not complain during the day; she couldn't have felt the attack coming on."

I wish from my very soul that Emma could have had some hint of *her* attack, which was evidently coming on with most tremendous strides. I had not courage to tell her of the danger. I trembled at the prospect of another concussion—a fresh dilaceration of her scarce-healed heart. After breakfast she proceeded again to Mrs. Springdale's apartment, and again she was refused admittance. "Mrs. Springdale could not possibly receive visitors. She was not equal to the fatigue." Emma resumed her seat in our own room, with a chidden and dejected countenance. The servant-maid shortly afterwards entered with a note addressed to me. It ran thus:—

"Sir,—I have to request that you will provide yourself with other apartments at your very earliest convenience. Your week will be due to-morrow, and if you will then quit my house, I shall feel obliged. The servant will render you any service in the removal of your luggage, and in hastening your departure. I must decline any visits from the lady; and I cannot, in conclusion, forbear expressing my extreme surprise, that a gentleman should so far forget himself, as to attempt the imposition of which you have been guilty. I am, sir, your humble servant,

"MARY SPRINGDALE."

"P.S.—You will excuse me for adding that, if you have any regard for your happiness, you will do well to leave the wicked and designing person, who, from all I hear, seems bent upon your ruin."

Emma had taken the letter from the girl. As soon as the latter quitted the room, she read it to me aloud. She faltered and lost colour; but of violent passion, which I expected, and looked for with the most torturing anxiety, there was not the least appearance. She closed and bit her lips, and from their down-pressed corners she extracted the convulsed expression of a galled and wounded pride.

Habit hardens. Annoyed as I was by the complete disruption of the small social circle in which I had forespoken so much real enjoyment, I walked through the streets of Huntingdon in search of another place of refuge, without any intense or visible emotion. I was, perhaps, partly borne up by the unlooked-for absence of all passionate expression on the part of Emma, attributing such absence to a growing apathy, and a disregard for the world's opinion, which, in existing circumstances, were much to be desired. In an obscure corner of the town, I detected a shy-looking chemist's shop, a dismal house of drugs, that stood, ashamed of its condition, away from the roadside, rather avoiding than courting public observation. There are houses, as well as individuals, whose poor and downward-tending looks bespeak at once their loss of character, and an utter hopelessness in respect of its recovery. Such a house was this. From the side door I received the information that the private part of it was to be let furnished, and that further particulars might be gathered "from the pharmacopolist in the chemical laboratory." "Here, at least,"

thought I, "we may live without insult or disturbance: few enquiries will be made respecting us, and the proprietor will scarcely stand on trifles." I walked into the shop.

Behind the counter, beneath a miserable account of empty boxes, I saw a man of middle height, very corpulent, very red, and, if the silent talk of most expressive features might be trusted, very overbearing. He had a full and fish-like eye, a low receding forehead, a thick abnormal nose, and a mouth on which conceit had sat for so many years that it was a human mouth no longer, but a triumphal arch of flesh, magnificent and broad.

His hair concluded in a bobtail—his hands were clasped behind him, covered by his skirts. There stood before this mighty man a dozen miserable women, trembling beggars, diseased in body, heart-crushed, and starved. A few were clothed, the majority were—not naked—it is the most that can be said with truth! The tatters of gowns which, when thoroughly worn out, they had first received and prized as treasures, hung loosely about their bodies, and scarcely saved them from exposure. Over the eyes of one, whom low and bad living had deprived of sight, there was a deep covering of brown paper; another, breathing hard, and owning a face in which the claims of death were already written, sought a temporary support from the plastered wall. There was a vacant chair which she gazed on with a longing eye, looking alternately and most imploringly at it, and at the ruler of the place, without whose gracious leave she deemed it more than her life was worth—Heaven knows, it was very little!—to seat herself and take her rest. A third was lame; all were touched with some distemper that might be traced to the same melancholy cause—to rife and pinching want. The apothecary, of whom the whole number stood in manifest dread, surveyed his company with a haughty ostentatious stare, that marked him at once for an impostor. He deserted his patients as soon as he caught sight of me, supposing my business of a more urgent character. I requested that the poor sufferers might have his first attention.

"Oh, they can keep, sir!" said the vainglorious man, "they can keep. But as you please. No. 1, *Jenkins*, with the *oculus*."

An emaciated female here stepped forward. She had a livid mark beneath her eye, the black and blue of a blow or fall. The apothecary frowned, and peered at her mysteriously from many points of view. "Do you know the art and science?" he enquired, turning at length to me.

"I do not, sir."

"This is a treat, then, that you can't enjoy. I could admire it for ever. A lovely colour!—pity it should ever fade. The learned call it *Ikey Moses*. It's a perfect case. How's your husband, Jenkins?"

The patient shook her head.

"Still suffering from alcohol?—eh—speak out."

"He's very bad, sir," said the poor creature, and then entered upon a long, sad history of domestic tyranny and dissipation.

"There's your aqueous liquid," exclaimed the chemist, interrupting her. "Wash the part, *bis vel ter quotidie*, every now and then. Sevenpence. Now, Mrs. Wiggins, No. 2. Here's a case, sir, that would have puzzled Hippocrates. The doctor round the corner calls it acute *Phlebitus*. Bah! Stuff and nonsense. *Bugbitus*, just as likely."

Mrs. Wiggins took the place of Mrs. Jenkins, who had departed with her lotion. The present invalid was suffering from exhaustion—she was famished.

"Now listen to the diagnostics," remarked the man of science, pointing to me with his extended arm.

"Wiggins, what do you feel?"

"Oh, very sinking!" moaned the sufferer.

"No plethora?"

"No what, sir?"

"Oh, I forgot!" said the questioner, blushing like a clever man at his mistake.

"We must descend. Poor ignorama! Don't you feel very full, Wiggins? Stop! Before you answer, think a little; that's my plan of treatment."

"Indeed I don't, sir," answered the hungry wretch.

"Wonderful instance of self-delusion! A fresh phenomenon. Mark it down. Wiggins, you eat too much."

"Heaven bless you, sir!" exclaimed the woman with surprise.

"You do—don't say you don't. I must phlebotomise you into abstinence! What have you eaten to-day?"

"Nothing, sir!"

"And yesterday?"

"Some bread and water, sir!"

The chemist paused—then with his thumb and finger slowly stroked his chin.

"This *is* remarkable. Symptoms cutting both ways. Who shall say it isn't loss of *appetitus?* Let us tack about. Now, Wiggins, mark. You don't sleep at night?"

"Very little sometimes."

"That will do—that's a symptom. Look at me. You feel you-don't-know-howish?"

"I think I do, sir."

"Come, Wiggins, none of that. You are *sure* you do. A sinking in the stomach now and then—eh?"

"Yes, sir, continually."

"What—I've clenched it, have I? The animal wants tone, sir. We must wind her up. Wiggins, this is serious. We must draught you. Take a *haustus*—that's Latin for a *mouthful. Repetitur quotidie*—repeat it night and morning. One and twopence—get it ready."

"I'm not worth a single farthing, sir."

"Wiggins, you are an incurable. Physic's thrown away upon you. Go, inhale the fresh and bracing air. Walker, No. 3." And Mrs. Wiggins crawled away ashamed, and Mrs. Walker, No. 3, advanced to the bashaw. In a similar manner he prescribed for all. To such as could scrape together the required pence, his medicines were a panacea; the extreme pauper was pronounced incurable, and was discharged accordingly. In a little time the shop was cleared. The scene, however, had lasted long enough to effect a gradual forgetfulness of my own condition, and to oppress me with a lively sense of others' woes.

"Such is business," said the apothecary, addressing me, his only auditor. "No time to lose in our profession. Patients must be healed, *currente calomel*, as we doctors say. Wherein, sir, can I serve you? To the last page of the Pharmacopœia you shall command me."

I told my business, and I thought the garrulous and offensive man would never cease to praise his rooms and furniture. "His house was suited to professionals—had been fitted up for his own private residence, with no ulterior view to lodgers. Lodgers, as such, were his abhorrence. But he was man—the social being in the creative scheme—unwed, and he longed to *feel* society about him. As friends he would receive us; not else. The fee for the apartments was a secondary matter. He did not let to *make* by them. He hoped that his high standing acquitted him of *that*. Thank

Heaven, who had made him so essential to his fellow-creatures, he was above suspicion! But he must have friends; it was a human weakness, and he submitted." The rooms were dark and low—the furniture most mean—the rent unreasonably high; but I agreed to take the place. It was a quiet home for Emma—that was all I needed. Having arranged the terms, I left the shop, my spirits burdened, I knew not why—my mind stirred up and troubled, I asked not wherefore.

The same evening Emma and I took possession. I had requested in the morning that a fire should be lighted, and all things made comfortable, previous to the arrival of the lady; but as it often happens, where promises are large and statement highly coloured, there was a falling off in the performance. Mr., or, as his pauper-patients styled him, *Doctor* Weezen, rated the servant child, (the sole domestic of the house, innocent of her fourteenth year,) and scolded her for her neglect, in a harangue that would have sounded better had it been delivered to a company of soldiers. He then apologised to Emma, and told her that an establishment was the most oppressive thing in life, and that domestic cares had well nigh been too much for Socrates.

First impressions, whether true or false, are dangerous if unfavourable. No after-knowledge, no wise experience, can efface entirely the sad complexion that is spread abroad with the first shock of sensibility. Without exertion, and in an instant, in a breath, the quick and heated fancy is impressed. Years of endeavour will not wear away the form. When we stepped into the cold and joyless rooms, Emma involuntarily recoiled. I shared the impulse which had moved her, and was sensible that we had made a downward step. Dismal conceptions filled my mind, at once disturbed, distressed it, bore upon it with the force of *incubi*. I made an effort to shake them off. They relaxed not. Incoherent apprehensions, not to be disdained, mystical shadows though ye be, ye are the invisible but certain harbingers of real and fast-approaching misery! Gratifying as the unconcernedness of Emma had been upon the receipt of Mrs. Springdale's letter, I was very sorry to observe that her exemption from violent emotion seemed not only likely to continue, but to merge, at last, into a settled melancholy. For a fortnight we had occupied Doctor Weezen's rooms, and during that time she made no effort to rally, evinced no desire to be roused from the moody and desponding state into which she had gradually fallen. Day after day she would sit, for a time needle in hand, looking at, rather than pursuing, her work; then she would suddenly put it aside and muse, resting her elbow on her knee, her cheek upon her hand, smiling perhaps, and so bitterly, that it chilled me to stand by and witness it. I tried every manœuvre that affection could suggest, to divert and cheer her; but my office was a thankless one. One day, after I had talked for half an hour, with a gaiety that almost choked me, from the exertion which was required to force it up, she sat as gloomy and as silent as ever; and the only acknowledgment I got was a fixed stare, and a pitiful shake of the head.

"Oh, dear me, Emma!" I said at length, with a truly miserable sigh, "this is dreadful work. I shall go out of my mind, that will be the end of it; and if this is to last, I don't care how soon. Little did I think that all our happiness was to end in this!"

"Are you unhappy, then?" enquired Emma.

"Am I! I never was so wretched in my life. I have given up everything for you Emma, and——"

"I know it!" she exclaimed, "and you repent it. Why have you not

said so before? You believe *that* woman, and you hate me. Let me leave you. Let *the wicked and designing wretch* depart!" And she rose from her chair in great agitation.

"Emma, you are greatly to blame for talking in this way. Whatever people may have said, I am sure I have always treated you with great kindness. The harsh usage of others has made me love you the more."

"I would that I were dead!" she cried, "desolate outcast that I am! Do not mind me, Stukely—do not listen to me. I feel that I am ungrateful to you."

"Dearest Emma! you are not ungrateful. I do not upbraid you. But why should we have these interruptions to our happiness? If you will but smile, and look cheerful, and live as we used at Mrs. Springdale's, everything will go on well. I am sure, for this last week, my life has been a burden to me. How can I possibly keep up my spirits, whilst you are sad and mournful, and close your lips against me?"

"Dear Caleb!" exclaimed Emma, bursting into tears, which fell before me like a refreshing shower, "return to Cambridge. *Be* happy. Leave me. Let me go into the world—the cruel, cruel world, and beg my bread from door to door, and be refused. Let me starve and die; but do not let them say that I have been your ruin and destruction."

"You think too much of these things, dear. Let them say what they please. Nothing can afflict me, if you will only be merry and gay. What a pity it is we haven't a pianoforte here! A little music would set everything to rights—delicious music! We must hire one if we can. Come, smile and look bright, as you know how. There's a dear Emma!"

"But about Cambridge, Caleb?"

"Well then, dear, I promise you, if you will put a good face upon matters, and become immediately the sweet, good-tempered Emma whom I used to know, I will not let another day pass without fixing a time for my return."

You have seen the sun, upon a spring day, breaking through the jealous clouds which shut out the vault of heaven, and intercept the adoring heart of man. You have seen, I say, and felt the power of the gush of liquid light that made, for one brief interval, the sober earth to smile, and passed, like joy, into the secret caverns of your soul. How transient is the gleam! How hastily do the murky clouds unite again, with more compactness than before, and quench that joy and smile! Thus evanescent, but with such potency, did the sparkling eyes of her I loved, and madly loved, send forth again its rays, to console and cheer me. Thus quickly did the unwholesome vapours of her mind extinguish them.

Unable to remain in her presence not touched by her condition, and fearful of adding to her melancholy by advice and entreaties which in no way removed her cause of suffering, I left her on the following morning, in a state of mind bordering on despair, and without knowing whither to direct my steps. I walked mechanically into the laboratory of Doctor Weezen. He received me very graciously, explained to me, with much magniloquence, the properties and peculiar virtues of his medicines; and, after a most abstruse and learned disquisition on the healing art in general, he told me that it was time to see his patients, and how proud he'd feel if I would kindly bear him company. The doctor, as a man, I heartily disliked—his skill and knowledge I regarded with contempt. I accepted his invitation nevertheless, and did not scruple, upon our way, to beg a remedy for an habitual gloomy state of mind.

"Or, as we should say, in technic parlance, 'a superabundance of black bile.' I am afraid, sir, it's a case for Bedlam. It's not professional to

recommend the bastinado; and yet there is nothing like a cudgel to cure a melancholy. A dose or two I've known restore the mental equilibrium. At Bedlam, it's the standard recipe. Is the patient young?"

"Not very old, sir."

"Then you have a chance of cure. When an old head gets dull and flabby, tonics are thrown away upon it."

With similar profound remarks Dr. Weezen entertained me as we passed from den to den. His patients were a most destitute and squalid troop, holding life on terms that made it scarcely worth possession. Doctor Weezen evidently thought so. His mode of treatment was in conformity with this idea, and, more than any other thing, was calculated to lighten speedily the burden of existence. Henceforward, I repeated daily my visits, in company with the fussy doctor; and daily did I witness scenes of exquisite, unmitigated suffering, whose naked, horrid aspect would have shocked and driven me back, had it not elicited, in mercy, a spark of human fellow-feeling, by whose light I was directed into usefulness. Many of the unfortunate needed bread more than physic; and I supplied them, as far as I was able, with the means of getting it. More than one poor wretch looked at me with a vacant eye, doubtful of the act of charity, and took the offering without a word of thanks. The warm heart of benevolence had never taught them the language of gratitude, and they might be pardoned if they were ignorant of its expression.

Privileged in being the instrument of good, and busy now from day to day, I felt less acutely than before the continued mournfulness of Emma. But time wore on. Returning from my walks, I met no glistening and love-telling eye of welcome—no tongue to ask a hundred unimportant questions—unimportant in themselves, but most significant of the ardent, true affection. All was silence and despondency. The cause I knew not, could not learn. Often I asked, and a repulsive sigh was then the only answer. Could it be sullenness and a dislike of me? I saw no reason for suspicion; but my pride took fire, and a thought of anger started in my mind—one smarting thought—it was the first, and love corrected and suppressed it. But this moroseness was not the only change that had taken place in Emma. Her health was yielding before the influences of this cherished care, this ever-gnawing trouble. Within a month, her once lovely countenance had undergone a transformation that confounded and alarmed me. The delicate complexion, that fair, transparent hue, had vanished. A coarseness had grown over and encrusted it. What sickness could have effected the silent, hideous alteration? Her clear and lustrous eye, that bewitching eye, in whose fairy cell had lurked the philtre that had first enchanted me, had lost its brilliant sheen, had parted with its dignity and power. "What illness of the mind," I asked again, "can rob the organ of its purer part, leaving to us this heavy, dull, and watery orb?" Her face was turgid—her slender and most graceful form encumbered with a fast-increasing, unbecoming fulness. Daily, almost hourly, I saw the gradual change, and stood amazed and horror-stricken. The longer I gazed upon the fading beauty, the more offensive and unpardonable did I deem her melancholy and unsocial manner—the more lively did I feel the injury she inflicted—the greater seemed the sacrifice that I had made for unrequited love. A second thought of anger started in my brain; but love was less awake to treason than before, and made no effort to destroy it.

I sat alone one evening. Emma had retired to rest. I still reflected on her odd behaviour, her unaccountable neglect. "For it is neglect," I said, "and, worse than that, ingratitude. She is strangely altered in her per-

son! Who could believe that this is Emma whom I knew three months ago? How fast does beauty fade! But this is nothing—at least, it is very little compared with her offence. She cannot be accountable for *that*. I never loved her for her face alone. I am sure of it. I loved her rather for—for—but it does not matter now, her treatment of me is intolerable—and it has made me most unhappy. What have I not given up for her! Ah, what indeed!" And I rose from my chair, and paced the room in perturbation. "I must not think of it." A sudden rush upon my conscience of desperate thoughts that had long been chained in sleep by Passion, (now imprisoned and enslaved herself,) and whose violence was all the stronger for the previous slumber, almost overthrew my reason. I stood still with terror. "Good Heaven!" I exclaimed, "whither have I been wandering? What will they think at HOME? O God! my father! my poor mother! She will break her heart. What WILL they think of me? I must go back to Cambridge. In a few days my furniture will be taken from me if that fearful bill is not duly paid. Where can I get a hundred pounds? What shall I do? O Emma, Emma! have I deserved that you should heap these coals of fire upon my head? I'll not permit another day to close upon me without some step. What is best to do? I'll write—no—I'll return to London. How unfortunate I have been! Why have I been singled out for all this trial and affliction? Oh, that delectable scholarship! From the moment that I swore to have it, I was doomed. I must do something. Let me think quietly. Shall I set out immediately for Cambridge, or go home? I haven't a single friend to advise me. I never had a youthful friend like other boys. Everything has been against me. Well, I think I had better go to Cambridge first—see Levy, and then hasten to my father, and supplicate his pardon. I am sure he will pity and forgive me, and I *must* do better for the future. I'll pack up my things at once. In the morning, I'll take leave of Emma. Ah, Emma! What is to be done with her? Poor creature, she must not be cast away! She shall suggest a plan. She has insisted upon my leaving her. What a comfort that it is her own request! It would be madness to refuse compliance with it." With such vague talk I endeavoured to discharge the horrible conceptions of my mind, and I at last succeeded. Before I went to bed I collected all my movables, and made every preparation for a departure on the morrow. "I am sure that I have concluded wisely," I whispered to myself. "I feel so peaceful and so satisfied—my heart seems so much lighter." I proposed to announce my resolution as soon as we arose. The morning came, and then——I thought it better to postpone the momentous communication until the evening. The excitement of the previous night had left me very nervous, and my courage threatened to desert me. "One day can't make the difference," said I, "and I shall be more comfortable by and by: when the shutters are closed, and one is sitting by the fire, things are managed so much better. I can bring out the subject by degrees, without the fear of startling her, and the risk of ruining my scheme. Nothing shall prevent my quitting Huntingdon to-morrow—that is certain."

With the double object of paying a *pour prendre congé* visit to my diseased acquaintances, and of extracting vigour from the fresh and limpid air, I left my lodging at a very early hour. The prospect of a speedy termination of my present mode of life acted favourably upon my spirits; I talked with sprightliness, and briskly moved about, and was half persuaded that I had become a very virtuous character, and deserving of much sympathy and praise. The invalids received a double portion of their small allowance. I gave them in addition some excellent counsel

(which might have been of service to myself); then, wishing them a quick recovery, a richer and a better friend, I shook them all severally and warmly by the hand, and left them to their dismal meditations. It was late when I returned. I walked before the door some dozen times, to gather round my heart the necessary stimulus. Having goaded myself sufficiently with thoughts of duty—unkind treatment—altered nature (taking particular care the while to shut out all incitements on the score of altered *beauty*), I stopped at length, and walked softly up the staircase.

At the very moment of my entering the apartment, Emma, with a hasty and disordered action, rose, as it appeared, immediately from the floor, and sat herself with violence and precipitation at the table. She was greatly agitated—her cheek was flustered—her eye glaring with a wild besotted look. I was transfixed with terror. What ailed her? I would have asked the question; but, as I moved towards her for the purpose, she set her teeth together and repelled me with a horrible unearthly laugh. I glanced beneath the table to discover, if possible, the reason of her first strange movement. For an instant, I burned with *jealousy!* She marked me, and anticipating my design, darted thither, and crouched like one possessed. Quick as was her motion, she failed to conceal what, as it appeared in sight, sickened and dismayed me. Half hidden by her sweeping garments, there revealed itself—a bottle of the accursed wine received from Levy! What a history did it tell! Frightful, harrowing exhibition! Miserable woman!—Debased beyond the power of recovery. INTOXICATED ——Lost!

"Emma," I said, trembling like a leaf, "what is the meaning of all this—this drink?———"

"Drink!" she replied in a hysteric voice, "ay, sir, I learnt it of my father. We have died of it for centuries. It has killed a whole churchyard of us. When did you ever hear of a sober Harrington? Never, since the flood." And she screamed a madman's laugh. Mad in truth she was. I sought to pacify her; but she furiously repulsed me, vowed she did not know me, and commanded me to be gone, to leave her presence, and not disturb the banquet. When she found me still remaining, she surveyed me with contempt, and then proudly paced the room, muttering, as she went, about her station, and the disrespect that mortals paid her. There was a vicious drift about her eye, which, as I met it, quailed and frightened me. It spoke a malicious and determined will, and exposed the exclusive deadly privilege of *wine*. Illustrious beverage! The meaner liquors only unfit us for exertion. It is your higher boast to ripen us for crime!—Now it was that previous symptoms, mysterious and inexplicable when they arose, were interpreted and made clear. Now the shaking of the hand, the loss of appetite, the sinking of the spirits, the general torpor and depression of the frame, were traced to their disgraceful origin. Now I beheld the insidious and tremendous power that had stripped and triumphed over human loveliness. Seductive poison, most malignant juice, thy victory was unequivocal! I acknowledged it, and trembled.

The violence of Emma increased with every passing minute. She talked and raved until she lashed herself to fury. My presence exasperated and made hotter the brain that was on fire already. I could accomplish nothing by remaining in the room. In a state of distraction I quitted it, with the forlorn hope of effecting something by my absence. I hastened to the "*chemical laboratory*," and threw myself into the arms of Doctor Weezen with as much warmth and affection as if he had been my dearest friend in life. Intense misery makes any one look amiable, especially if any one can be of service to us. "Oh, my dear Doctor!" I exclaimed,

"help me, I am a wretched being."—"Sorry for you," said the chemist, eschewing the embrace as politely as he could, "but I am as poor as Job just now. How very odd! I was just agoing to ask you for the rent. Patients falling off uncommon fast. This is very staggering, Mr. Stukely."

"It isn't money that I want. My poor girl! what can be done for her? She is in a dreadful state."

"Oh, bless my heart!" replied the gentleman in a different tone. "You don't mean *that*. I had no idea it was so near. But, my dear sir, don't alarm yourself, 'tis a very common case with ladies. Your *first*, I guess? Well, that accounts for your anxiety. You'll be quieter when you have had a dozen." As the doctor spoke, Emma's foot was heard loudly and quickly stamping overhead. There was a murmur of her voice—a rapid walking up and down, and a violent slamming of the door. Then all was silent. "Awful hysteria, isn't it?" enquired the doctor, looking serious and surprised. "But it is symptomatic. Nothing frightens me when I know it is symptomatic. Don't you be frightened, my good young friend."

I waited half an hour with Dr. Weezen, determined, if the noise was heard again, to communicate the sad discovery, and to avail myself of his advice in the emergency. But the clamour was not repeated. At the close of the half-hour all was silent still. I promised the doctor to call him up should his services be required; the doctor promised me that he wouldn't take off his boots, much less go to bed, and then I stole timorously to my room again. The door was closed not locked. I gently opened it, and entered. The apartment was in darkness. I called to Doctor Weezen in a whisper for a light, which he brought, and then I found that Emma had departed. I dare not say that an over-hasty conclusion which I formed—viz., that she had run away for ever—afforded me a gleam of inexpressible relief! Our bed-room was on the second floor; thither I proceeded. As I drew near, *sounds* reached my ear again, and fell like cold and heavy marble on my heart. She had fastened the door, was gabbling loud and incoherently, slapping her hands, and beating the ground with her foot. In a word, she was madder than ever.

I sat upon the stairs before the bed-room door, bitterly regretting that I had not been born an Israelite in the days of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, under whose mild and benevolent policy the little Hebrew children were destroyed as soon as they saw the light. "It is quite certain," said I, "that I am the most unfortunate wretch in the creation. I am crossed in everything. What a terrible upset is this! Just hark at her! Oh, dear, dear, dear! it's a pretty business altogether. Any one but myself," I continued, soliloquising, "would leave her this very night, and really she half deserves it. But that, I suppose, would be considered wrong. I owe a duty to my parents certainly. Bless me, I wonder how they are! What can they think of my long silence? Emma cannot have a claim upon me after what has happened. I have a good mind to go." And I got up; but at that moment, Emma, seized with a sudden paroxysm, burst into tears, and the voice recalled so many dear associations, was so very like the voice of Emma in our early days of love, that the gradually hardening heart gave way, and straight was malleable for anything. I resumed my seat. During the succeeding hour or two, I knocked many times against the door; first softly, then harder, and at last with violence, but an inhuman laugh or yell was the sole acknowledgment of my application. The strength of the poor creature was, however, failing fast. The intervals of repose were longer, her footsteps much less heavy, her exclamations not half so forcible. I resolved to wait until exhaustion restored her reason, and I could make her sensible of her mournful situation. It was about

three o'clock that I made this final resolution, when I had become very chilly and depressed with cold. It occurred to me that I could keep watch better if I were more warmly clad. Accordingly, I procured my great-coat from the sitting-room, covered myself with it and a yard or two of thick stair matting, took my position once more upon the stairs, and then immediately fell fast asleep.

I awoke about eight o'clock from a dream so dreadfully horrid, that the satisfaction I derived from its being unreal actually reconciled me for a time to my only less horrible and true condition. I did not hear a movement in the house. Silence was in the bed-room. I tried the handle of the door, and it yielded to the gentle touch. I entered, and on tiptoe glided to the bed. Emma was sitting up awake. She cast upon me one brief gaze of mingled grief and shame, and then the pale, debauched, and haggard countenance dropped in dejection on her bosom. She did not speak; I did not reproach her. For many hours she continued in a state of mental numbness, and I was constant to her side. At length, towards evening, she fixed upon me steadily her sluggish and cavernous eye, clasped tremblingly my wrist, and in the low half-whispering voice of vanquished modesty, implored me to obtain for her a draught of wine.

"You know not what you ask for, Emma," I replied. "Bid me get for you some deadly poison or a dagger. You might use both with equal prudence. I might supply you with them with equal justice and humanity. Ask rather for wholesome food. You have eaten nothing throughout the day."

"Wine, wine!" she repeated, in a tone of the deepest supplication, and moistening with her tongue her parched and fevered lips; "wine, Stukely, or I shall die before your eyes!" and she squeezed my hand convulsively.

"Emma!" I exclaimed, "of all my misfortunes, this stroke falls heaviest upon me. How you are changed! what infatuation has led you into this gulf of misery? Emma, I think I see you, but I mistrust my senses. My heart breaks as I sit beside you." I could say no more, for my throat burned and was choked with emotion.

"Wine, Caleb! there's a dear, Caleb. Wine, wine!" It was the burden of her song:—say what I would, wine was my answer. All her ideas had left her but this one.

"Whatever may be the consequence, Emma," I said, with seriousness, "I will not comply with your request. I will not deliberately become your murderer. I am punished sufficiently already. Compose yourself if you can, and forget the past." She threw my hand away with an offended air, and spake no more that evening.

Daily I vowed to leave her, and daily her condition gave desertion a cruel and unnatural aspect. Hour after hour I waited for the smallest proof of amendment, which should also be my signal for departure; but the change was still from bad to worse. From morning till night she reiterated her intense entreaties, which I invariably rejected. Then, from revenge or inability, she refused all nourishment, and very soon she grew emaciated, wan, and deathlike. Another week passed by. Her hand began to shake, and never ceased; her muscles quivered, and a constant tremor of the body moved the very bed with quick vibrations: now her eyes were rolling with alarm, and now were occupied in an incessant vacant watchfulness; now they were fixed sternly upon me, and now they chased about the room some phantom of the brain, and followed till they lost it. What wonder if the reason took alarm, and forsook its frail and tottering tenement? She no longer knew me.

"Monster!" she cried out, shrinking from my touch as I approached

her, "would you kill the helpless creature? would you sell her to the dogs? It's a brave carcass. Ah, ah, ah, poor lad!—Are you frightened? It won't hurt you, but you mustn't kill, kill, kill!" She stopped, and then proceeded in another strain: "Come, dear mother, the bells are ringing. The folks are all ready for church. Look there, too—there's dear old Adam hobbling as fast as his spindle shanks can carry him—faster, faster, Adam, or they'll begin without you. What a gay Sunday it is! For all the world, like a merry-making! But the sun shines," she continued mournfully, "and that is so deceitful. The night is sure to come now. Oh! it would be a clever trick to steal the sunshine!—Don't talk unkindly to me, James—I meant no harm. You forget, Temple, that I gave up everything for you. What, again!" she shrieked out louder than ever, catching sight of me in the inconstant progress of her eye; "will this man never be gone? Ha! have I caught you?—Hide that knife; murder, murder—the fiend, the fiend!" And then she checked herself immediately, fixed upon the ceiling an impotent and empty stare, whilst heavy perspiration hung in pearly drops about her.

I had no power to move. I was fastened to the spot, and I looked upon the poor maniac with a heart torn by conflicting passions. I was startled by a voice. It fell upon my ears like a faint memory—like the haunting spirit of a sound deceased—the spirit that loves to awaken slumbering fancy. It touched me, and it glided on;—what was its business now? The voice was heard again, and with more distinctness than before. It was the substance, and no shadow—the reality, and not the symbol. It was louder yet! It called my name. It is accompanied by a footstep. That voice, that step, and *here!* Earth, open your devouring jaws for pity's sake, and hide me from my *Father!*

PART V.

HOME REVISITED.

"I'll tell you what it is, Simeon Clayton, they may be light-hearted again before long—they are young, and it is but natural; but they will never be as they have been: their eyes are opened this day, and they have learned what this world is made of—sorrow and trial for the young; and, for the old, aches and pains, as we know full well, Simeon. God help us!"—*Paget's Tales of the Village.* THE MOURNER.

It is a dull and dreary winter's day. The earth sleeps soundly, and on her rigid face appears no smile, to tell that dreams of spring are moving her with joy. The thick and heavy air hangs like a shroud upon her, and a frozen silence reigneth everywhere. The blood of life is numbed, and in the vegetable, as well as in the animal, performs its functions lazily. It is a day when sunny light becomes a paradox—cerulean sky a pure impossibility; when crimson flowers, and laughing trees, and purling brooks, seem intimations from a poetic childhood, recollections of a splendid and far distant country, when summer thoughts bring with them shadowy recollections of a fairy land, pictures of time, and place, and circumstance, that had their birth and origin in the immortal mind, and

whose existence was first revealed to us in sweet and cherished books. Winter is an envious churl, and it is difficult to realise the pleasant summer time if he stand by. Snow, a month old, lies about in clumps and patches, embrowned with age, hardened and coalesced by frost. Trees, whose spreading foliage has sheltered many times, and shall again protect, from heat and storm, the solitary wayfarer, stand defenceless now themselves —dismantled skeletons. And yet how preferable their natural hybernal death to the unwholesome life of yew-trees, that at intervals diversify and make more hideous the melancholy road; ever and anon starting upon my path like wandering spirits doomed to carry on a changeless and eternal life in a vast world of mutability!

Nearly two years have elapsed since the *Cambridge Intelligence* discharged me at Trinity Gate. The *Huntingdon* coach carries me slowly, but too quickly, back to London. My university education is completed. My father is at my side. His cheek is very pale, and his brow wears a settled sadness. He has sighed many times, (has he not wept too?—Have I not watched it fall—the life-blood tear of manhood?) but he has not spoken. He is wasted, and corroding care has fed upon his spirit. Ah! he is very ill, and I dare not ask how it is with him, and why he languishes—the tongue of the criminal is tied. We are not alone. The coach contains another traveller, a man advanced in years, small in stature, blessed with a countenance that is radiant with benevolence—his grey eyes twinkle with delight, and he is restless in his seat. Frequently the excited little man hurries to the coach window, looks into the road with an averted face, and then returns to his place with a moistened eye, or with a beamy smile illuminating the breadth and depth of his venerable and social visage. Sometimes he attacks his nose, and coughs most vehemently, to make us understand how cruelly he suffers from a catarrh, and how little from the inundation of a mirth that will not be restrained; sometimes he hums a tune, and accompanies the measure with his feet, to carry off, it may be, through many and various channels, the impetuous stream of gladness ever running from his heart. His tongue is at length obliged to help in the dismission of the current.

"Bless him, bless him!" the gratified traveller ejaculated, and once more referring us to his nose for an explanation of his words—"Bless the dear boy's heart!"

My poor, cast-down father had not previously noticed our companion. He looked dejectedly at him now as he spoke.

"Don't mind me, don't mind me," he continued; "I am the happiest man in the creation, but I am not crazy. Is that your son? Pardon my excessive rudeness."

"He is, sir," said my father.

"Then you understand all about it, and I needn't apologise. Listen to me, my dear sir, for five minutes, and tell me if I am not the luckiest man in the world—with the exception of yourself, perhaps—I am sadly wanting in politeness. I married him this morning, sir. She is a lovely creature.

"Is she?" enquired my father mechanically, his thoughts being far, very far from the speaker.

"Yes—no," replied the gentleman, "I don't mean that. His wife is an angel—a love match—his old master's daughter. One of the right school, sir. Are you a grandfather, may I ask? I hope it is not an improper question."

"I am not, sir."

"Nor am I, but I hope to be one; and then my house won't hold me.

If it's a boy, they intend to call him Jeremiah—that's after me, of course. What is the meaning of Jeremiah?"

My father confessed his ignorance, and the happy man proceeded. "The dear boy is five-and-twenty this very day; and, as true as I sit here, he has never knowingly caused me one moment's pain. I may never see him again. It was hard to part with him. Don't you think so?"

"'*A good son maketh a glad father,*' saith the proverb," replied my father in a mournful voice.

"Yes," added the stranger quickly, "'*and a foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him;*' that's a proverb too, although it is not so much in my way as the other. I'll swear *your* proverb's true,"—and he rubbed his hands with glee, whilst my father drooped.

"It is exactly ten years since I bound him apprentice to John Claypole the brewer. You know him?"

Mr. Stukely shook his head negatively.

"What, not know John Claypole? Oh yes! you do. You have seen that fine house on the Godmanchester road. That's his. My boy will live there soon. He deserves it. I have no notion of calling a man lucky who works his own way up to fortune. My dear Jack! who would have thought that he'd marry that sweet child of Claypole's! They are, though I say it, the prettiest-mated birds that ever coupled. There's something to look at, too, in Arabella—that's a curious name isn't it?—foreign, I suppose—eh? Oh, dear me!" Now part of the little gentleman's joy oozed in perspiration down his forehead, and he cleared it off, and then continued, "I was saying something—oh yes! I bound him to his father-in-law—not his father-in-law then, you know—that has only been since nine o'clock this morning. 'Jack,' said I, when I shook hands with him on the bridge ten minutes after his indentures were signed, 'Jack,' said I, 'we are very poor, but you have gentle blood flowing in your veins—don't disgrace us.' 'Father,' said he, 'I won't, depend upon it,' and he gave me a grasp of the hand in return for my own, which I have felt ever since, whenever I talk or think about the lad. It is tingling now—it is really, sir—I don't romance;" and now his joy checked his utterance, and his handkerchief was busy with his eyes. My father listened to the old man with earnestness, and his pale lip trembled. "When the child's time was out, that's just three years ago, his mother was taken ill, and, poor creature, died too soon. If you had seen the boy at her bedside for one whole month——"

"How many miles is this from Huntingdon?" enquired my father, interrupting him.

"The last stone was twenty-three. Where did I leave off, sir? Dear me—How very warm it is!"

"And yet it freezes hard," rejoined my father.

"Do you really say so? Ah, cold cannot freeze a father's heart—can it, sir? Well, his mother died, and then, John Claypole sent for me; 'Jeremiah,' he said, (his father was second cousin to my wife's uncle, so, being relations, he always called me by my Christian name,)—'Jeremiah, your boy has two good qualities; he speaks the truth and has an honourable respect for ha'pence. I shall take care of him.' And hasn't he taken care of him? Hasn't he given him a share in the brewery, and a share of his house, and his own daughter all to himself? And hasn't the dear boy taken care of his father, and made him comfortable for life? And hasn't his father seen him married this very day, and hadn't he better make the best of his way home and die at once, because he can never be so happy

again if he lives to the age of Methuselah? I am so glad that you are a father, because you won't think me a fool for"——the concluding words were drowned in the handkerchief.

"You have much to be grateful for, sir," said my father, ready to weep from a very different cause. "You are a happy man."

"No, sir; I am three happy men. I think you will find that to be correct, if you take the average. I trust I am sufficiently humble; my privileges are manifold."

That my feelings during this interesting scene were not of the most agreeable kind may easily be supposed. During my long service with my present worthy employer, I have had many opportunities of noticing the behaviour of culprits on particular occasions, especially in the dock of the Old Bailey, at those intensely pleasant moments when a communicative witness enters upon an affecting portion of the said culprit's secret and domestic history. When, on these occasions, I have seen the brazen face throw off its metal, modestly avoid the public gaze, and languish gradually upon the breast: then have I, likewise, seen the *tableau vivant* of poor Caleb Stukely, pierced with remorse and shame, uneasy with the weight of his own head, and eager to evaporate, in the coach that carried him from Huntingdon.

The stranger grew more pleasant and loquacious; my father a more attentive listener. To me the latter did not address the shortest syllable. Although sitting at his side, I was in effect as much withdrawn from him as though an ocean rolled between us. He treated me with cold neglect. If his new acquaintance referred to me—and he often did so to gratify the parent's natural vanity, and to afford himself an excuse for a fresh recapitulation of the merits of his own darling offspring—my father returned a short, quick answer, and avoided discussion on the subject. I was indeed abandoned, and I quailed before the just anger of a father, which divided us now as surely as we had been united by his previous confiding and unbounded love. Once only had I ventured to speak since we entered the coach; and my father neither replied to me nor turned his face towards me. For the first, but not for the last time, did the thought of self-destruction possess my mind without alarming it.

We stopped for refreshment. My father did not enter the inn, but walked slowly through the lonely street, the only one of the village in which our coach halted. I followed him, and when I overtook him, seized his hand.

"Father, father!" I exclaimed at the same moment.

"Well, Caleb!" he replied, disengaging his hand, and in a passionless voice.

"Speak to me, dear father!" I cried out. "Be angry with me. Upbraid me. I can never repair the cruel wrong that I have inflicted upon you. I deserve punishment. Do not spare it. I will bear it patiently, gladly. But speak to me, for God's sake! Speak harshly, reproachfully; but do speak!"

"Caleb," answered my father, moved by my importunity, and in a tone of sorrow, "there are upbraidings and reproaches waiting you at home that will fall upon you with pitiless violence. Bear them if you can. *I* have no punishment to inflict. The hot iron is prepared. I can promise you no mitigation of suffering. You have sown—you must reap; there is a retributive justice *here*. Good or evil deeds done in the flesh are requited in the flesh. Gather yourself, then, and summon courage for the penalty. You will pay it shortly."

It was late at night when we reached home. The shops and houses

were closed. The streets of busy London were as tranquil as a field of slumbering roses. The flickering lamps made darkness visible; and a heavy coach or two, at intervals, rendered silence audible. We rang at the door of our habitation, and a strange man, with a lantern in his hand, opened it.

"Who's that, Bolster?" enquired a loud uncouth voice, emanating apparently from the shop.

"All right, master;" replied the attendant, locking and bolting the door, whilst my father proceeded to the parlour, and I went after him.

"Who are these?" I asked, surprised and alarmed at the presence of these unexpected visitors; "what are these men?"

"Our masters, Caleb; be grateful to them, and show them all civility: we are here on sufferance."

"Dear father, what can you mean? Is not this our house?"

"Our house is a large one—as wide as the world itself—it is roofed only by heaven. This is the first reproach. I told you they would come quickly. *Our* house Caleb? We are beggars, houseless, penniless, save what they allow in charity. They are very kind. We must not seem proud, or these men will get us turned out in revenge. I wouldn't care for myself, but what would you do? Stay here a minute; I will speak with them." Saying these words, he opened the parlour door which communicated with the shop, and joined the individuals who were sitting there. There were two; a small window permitted me to get sight of them. One was Mr. Bolster—the gentleman who admitted us: the other, I concluded to be the person whom he had honoured with the title of superior. Both of them were dressed with the same elegance and taste: and both were endowed with that intelligent cast of features which generally denotes a first-rate education, and an intimate acquaintance with things in general. Their eyes had evidently been to school from earliest infancy, and had learned all the languages. The other members of the facial family had been brought up with equal care, were beaming with the brightest polish, and had kept up steadily with the rapid march of civilization and scientific knowledge. They were gentlemen certainly not in danger of falling victims to their simplicity or worldly innocence. Mr. Bolster decorated the lower part of a very stout and ill-defined person with corduroy shorts, worsted stockings, and thick half-boots. His head was divided from the rest of his body by a Belcher handkerchief which supplied the place of a neck—a superfluous portion of "the form divine," with which Mr. Bolster had never been troubled. He wore a costermonger's coat, and a yellow waistcoat. He had a short and bristly head of hair; and in the centre of a low, flat, retreating, but by no means ugly forehead, he carried a stupendous wen—an enlargement possibly of the organ of benevolence or conscientiousness, if either of these sentiments lie hereabouts in the human skull. The "Master" was tall and scraggy, lacking flesh, but framed with bones of antediluvian form and structure. His dress was of the same character as Bolster's, a thought fresher, perhaps, in respect of colour—yet this might be a fancy suggested by the knowledge of their different conditions—but the expression of his countenance was very dissimilar. Master and man had seen much of life, and you marked them with a look for men of rare experience; but the wisdom and the learning that had made Bolster merry, had rendered the principal sad and thoughtful. The face of the former was stamped with a grin: that of the latter veiled with grief. At the feet of the tall man crouched an unsightly dog, remarkable for the mange, for leanness, and for his extraordinary resemblance to the gentleman who owned him. The two worthies were sitting

at a deal table before a roaring fire. A pewter pot containing porter was in the grasp of the unhappy principal, and a clay pipe was at his side. The table itself was ornamented with a quartern loaf, a lump of cheese, a pack of cards, one candle, and a cribbage-board. The men rose as my father entered the shop, and Bolster greeted him with a cordial laugh, whilst the master eyed him with sorrow and compassion. I could not overhear their conversation. In a few minutes my father returned to me.

"The men will let us share their bread and cheese," said my father; "it is too late to purchase anything to-night, and there is nothing in the house besides. You must be hungry, Caleb?"

"But what are these men to us, father? What wonderful change has taken place in our home! Where is my mother?"

My father changed colour, and a spasm caught the muscles of his face.

"It is not my fault that you have not known of these matters before. I have written to you many letters. I have sought you many times. I have done my duty by you."

"Indeed you have, my dearest father; and I have been ungrateful and unfilial. Believe me, I will be wiser for the future. Restore your confidence, and trust me."

"The future! the future!" repeated my father musingly, "that will hardly repair the past. We will have some talk to-morrow, Caleb. It is a short history to recite, but a weighty one. We must not refuse these good men's hospitality, or they will take offence; and I tell you they may get us cast into the street. It does not matter if I am thrown upon a dunghill. What would become of you? I must think of that;—oh yes! I ought to think of that."

"For the love of Heaven, I beseech you, my dear father, to explain yourself more fully—what power have these visitors over you? What right have they here?—what has happened?"

"Nothing, Caleb," replied my father, who seemed alarmed at my tone and agitation; "nothing. It happens every day; do not be frightened; many better, wealthier men than I have suffered it, and have held up their heads again, and have got rich and prospered;—there is no disgrace in bankruptcy."

"Bankruptcy!" I exclaimed, my blood curdling at the dreadful thought.

"Yes, bankruptcy!" reiterated my poor father, bursting into tears, which would not be suppressed; "it is too true, bankruptcy—shame—dishonour—ignominy! Everything is gone; our name is blasted—our home is snatched from us—the fair reputation, too, that has had no spot or stain for centuries, is soiled and smirched. They might have spared me this. Caleb, we are beggars, but this is least of all; if there were nothing else, they might take all, and welcome."

"Father, this is very sudden; I left you thriving, and in the midst of plenty."

"Yes, Caleb, and I left you innocent, and full of truth and promise. You are right; it has been sudden. We do not, indeed, meet as we parted." This was spoken with some bitterness, and I was immediately silenced.

"Come, resumed my father, in a milder voice, "you shall take some supper, and then go to bed; all the news cannot be told at once. Remember, Caleb, we have not corresponded for months, and much may come to pass in a single hour—in a moment. You shall know all to-morrow. Do not let us keep the good men waiting; they must be our friends—come now."

He walked again into the shop, and I followed him. Ill prepared as I

was for eating, I dared not disobey him; a preying sense of past undutifulness robbed me of free-will. Had it been left me, could I have exercised it in opposition to his wishes, when so much depended upon a cheerful compliance? The shop looked wretched indeed; the walls were stripped, and bales of merchandise were heaped upon the floor without order or care: they were marked and lotted. The large iron cupboard, which my father, for so many years, had nightly secured with double lock, and whose creaking hinges had so often sung a lullaby to his cashbooks and ledgers, stood open and deserted. The black shelves were empty; an open drawer displayed a few old banker's cheques, long since honoured, now crossed and valueless. Every other thing had been carried off. The shop itself, that was ever so neat and clean, and such a pattern of a place of business, was disfigured with the accumulated dust and dirt of weeks, and with the offscourings of shelves, whose tops had not been visited or disturbed for years before. You might have searched through London, and not found a place so well equipped and qualified for—the broken heart. Mr. Bolster and his companion rose again upon our entrance; a slight addition had been made to the repast—there was a second pewter pot; in other respects the table was as before described. I sat down with my meal already in my mouth—for my full heart was in it—and dared not look upon my unhappy parent for very grief and shame. I had scarcely seated myself when Mr. Bolster began to grin, and to exhibit various sprightly contortions of his face, much more pleasing to himself than to me, who appeared to be the subject of them. He planted his laughing eyes upon me, and when I met them withdrew them suddenly; not, however, before he was overtaken by a violent impulse to indulge himself and laugh outright. The struggle between this natural force, and his acquired notions of good behaviour, caused his cheeks to swell, and his features to assume the lines and forms of a vast kaleidoscope. Somewhat offended, I turned to his superior, whose head I encountered, oscillating mournfully, pendulum fashion. Every movement carried with it a vote of censure—a volume of reproof. I sat uneasy and silent between the tutelary geniuses of tragedy and comedy, who presided over my unfortunate parent's once prosperous dwelling-place.

"You have come from college, haven't you?" enquired Bolster with a chuckle. "You finished your eddication just in time. I hope you have taken your degrees. The governor takes his on Monday week, if the assignees is satisfied with his examination; I should say he'll pass. He isn't half so flat as he looks—are you, old gentleman?" And he handed my father a plate of bread and cheese, and gently pushed the pot of porter towards him.

"Do you think there will be any difficulty?" asked my father anxiously, and addressing himself to the chief officer.

The latter shook his head despondingly.

"Now, Mr. Growler, that's just the way with you," rejoined the lively Bolster. "For pouring cold water down a fellow's back, I never found your equal. You hadn't—oughtn't to have followed this here line of business. Bankruptcy is too sewere for you; every gazette as comes out I sees an alteration in you. You'll fall a wictim to your own profession—mark my words."

The principal looked at Bolster with an expression too deep for utterance, and then concealed his face and feelings for some minutes in the pewter pot.

"They surely will not distress me further," said my father; "what can they gain by it? I have given up everything."

Bolster winked, and answered, "In course you have. I never knew a bankrupt yet as hadn't. And when you goes up for your degrees on Monday week, and they asks you to surrender, you'll turn your pockets inside out, and show 'em the dirty lining, and the farden you got in change for the last half-pint, and take your oath you haven't another farden in the world to make that a ha'penny, and kiss the book to shew there's no doubt about it, but that it's all quite true and regular—and no mistake."

"I wouldn't hunt them in misfortune," said my father, "as some of these men are following me. They'll persecute me to the grave; it is a dreadful thing to have a merciless creditor."

"Now," continued Bolster, "I have seen a good deal of this here sort of life, and I don't mind them merciless ones at all. I like a savage to begin with; you tames him by degrees. It's your quiet and innocent boys as I dreads; them as was never in court afore, and cuddles the Bible when they swears to their debts, and kisses it so werry hard. Them chaps always looks as if they had walked into a place of worship, where him as is most religious and kisses hardest gets best pay. Nothing less than one-and-twenty shillings in the pound comes up to their belief; and ain't they wilder than heathens when they diskiver it's only three-ha'pence? Give me a fellow as is used to it, and knows the worst, and who blows at the book a mile off from his lips, 'cause he's internally satisfied, that if he presses it ever so close he couldn't press the dividend up to twopence. You may do wonders with a chap as is resigned, but I'm blessed if there is any moving one as is disappointed. That's my experience; and now, young gentleman, if you'll be so kind as to take the nightcap off that porter, I shall be happy to wish the old gentleman safe over his troubles."

My father carried on a conversation respecting his affairs in an under tone with Mr. Growler, Bolster, at the same time, initiating me into the Eleusinian mysteries of the Court of Bankruptcy. Both gentlemen were, as it is technically called, *in possession* of our house and its contents. Their sympathies were clearly engaged on my father's behalf, and many observations that escaped them, tended to produce the conviction, that any office of kindness which they could perform for us consistently with their duty, or, more accurately to speak, consistently with their safety and with their security from detection, should on no account be withheld. A species of paraphrase which Mr. Growler employed when he took leave of us at the close of supper, placed this matter beyond all doubt. "A man, Mr. Stukely," said he, "isn't accountable for what happens when he's fast asleep—that's morally certain. Bolster and I are not early risers; we like to indulge—on a Sunday morning especially. You may have noticed that the mornings are dark, I may say very dark. It is surprising how much may be done before breakfast—are you aware that the inventory isn't finished? It is a remarkable fact, that the stock in the parlour isn't in the catalogue at all. I am not obliged to know everything; I mean to say, there's no law to make me. I hope I do my public duty faithfully; but in this free country every man has a right to enjoy his private opinion—I have mine. Yours is a very hard case—I pity you—*you*, Mr. Stukely." The last *you* he uttered with a powerful emphasis, and then he stared at me with the same ill-natured sorrow as before, shrugged his shoulders, sighed, and left us.

The look of things up-stairs was even more desperate and comfortless than below. The furniture had been torn from every room. The largest apartment contained a temporary bed made upon the floor, a small deal table, and a solitary chair—nothing in the world besides. The room was

icy-cold; and when my father entered it, holding before me his small piece of dimly-burning candle, it seemed as if he were lighting me to a dungeon. I slept with him that night. In the morning I reminded him of his promise, and prayed him to give me some account of my absent mother. He desired me to accompany him to the room which, in their days of prosperity, had been their sleeping apartment; I did so. There was not a moveable in the place. He locked the door, and opened a very small cupboard which was in a corner of the room. He produced a hat covered with crape to the very crown, and a man's suit of black clothes. I screamed out, and dropped into his arms. When I recovered, my father was bending over me with a countenance pale as death, but dispossessed of all violent emotion.

"I would not put them on, Caleb," he said, in a voice of unnatural calmness, "until you had been informed of the fact. She is gone. I am here to tell it you. You are alive to hear it."

"Father," I enquired, "when was it—how—what was the cause? Sudden it must have been. Oh, let me know all! Merciful Heaven, what a blow is this!"

"Grief, grief, grief!" replied my father, repeating the words with a painful emphasis; "grief, such as only she could feel—blighting, withering anxiety and distress. For whom? For one who never cared to estimate the priceless worth of her absorbing and unselfish love."

I shook, and my brain writhed with an aching sense of guilt.

"Caleb, you are not unprepared for this—you cannot be. I warned you of the retribution that would follow upon ingratitude, and a mad neglect of one who lived only in the incessant pouring forth upon you of the stream of a maternal love, boundless and overflowing. I cautioned you of the danger of checking that gushing and too generous fount. I dreaded the revulsion. I knew that death would follow—but not so quickly. I did not calculate upon such astounding, such destroying speed."

"Father, do not say so. You cannot mean it. It is not true. Did I——"

"Break her heart?" he added quickly. "You did—may God forgive you for it!"

I fell upon my knees, and seized his hand, and wrung it in the extremity of mental suffering. "Father," I cried out, "*do you* forgive me! I have been a guilty wretch indeed. I have committed a most dreadful crime. I am her murderer." I stopped, sobbing bitterly.

"No, Caleb, I did not say that exactly," faltered my poor father.

"Oh yes! I am; and if I live for years—for ever—I cannot wash away the infamy. I can never make my repentance known to her. She can never behold the remorse and sorrow of my aching heart. She can never forgive me. But do not you discard me. Father, I will never leave you; I will slave for your happiness and comfort. Don't cast me away! Don't think me unworthy of your love—below your consideration! If we have lost her—God, what a dreadful thought!—if she is taken from us, how much more do you need the sympathy and help of your own flesh and blood! You cannot understand all that I have suffered from your cold and crushing silence. You would pity me if you did. I cannot live and bear it. Dear father, I repent—I remember the past with bitterness—with shame, with hatred of myself. Let me obliterate it by serving you obediently and lovingly for the time to come—dearest father, let me!"

"Say no more, boy," answered my father, returning my own trembling pressure of the hand; "say no more. She forgave and blessed you. I must not be cruel. May I confide in you, Caleb?" he asked, after a pause.

"I cannot wonder that you hesitate to do so," I replied. "In truth, father, I have given you no cause to trust me."

"But I will trust you, Caleb. You noticed the rude tone and manner of the man to whom we owed our meal last night. I was not angry with him. It is the mode they practise towards the broken down and ruined. He meant no harm. Integrity and insolvency are, to these men's view, as far asunder as vice and virtue. The bankrupt is a criminal—he is *without* the social circle—an object to be stared at, despised and shunned; bantered with for a moment, if you please, but avoided ever after. He has ceased to be of the community—the life-blood has left him. You will hear them, Caleb, talking of the *bankrupt*, as the living talk of a *corpse*. That man may be excused; but the creditors, Caleb—men who in their hearts know me better—accuse me of the vilest practices; they taunt me with the commission of acts impossible for me to conceive. Their losses have made them demons; they are infuriated at the consequences of a blow which, as it fell, only grazed them, but lacerated and mangled me. They are bent upon the destruction of my good name, and would make that bankrupt too. Caleb, it must never be. We must work night and day to clear away the heap of opprobrium beneath which they would bury the precious jewel of my life. We will prove to them and to the world that I am spotless."

"We will, dear father!" I exclaimed, burning with enthusiasm.

"You must do more, Caleb. Let me be proved innocent, as our sense of justice would demand, as our hearts could wish: remember, to an extent, I must die with a dishonoured name; with debts unpaid, obligations undischarged—leaving no means of satisfying them. This is a stigma no energy can remove. If you wish me to lay down my head in peace on my death-bed—soon I shall be called to do it, be it in peace or trouble—if you wish my spirit to be happy when my body is at rest, make me one promise now. Promise me to strive, to labour in every honourable way to realise a sum sufficient for the payment of these debts. If you are in earnest, God will prosper your exertions, and the memory which I leave covered with disgrace shall assuredly be made honourable again by you. Can you promise this to me?"

"Father, I beseech you to dictate the solemn promise in the terms you deem most fit, and I will make it cheerfully."

"It is enough," he said, "and I rely upon you."

The very same day, my father and I commenced an investigation of his accounts preparatory to a statement of his affairs, which was to be produced at his forthcoming examination before the officers of the law. He set about the task with the vigour of youth, and with the spirit and life which he had ever infused into his business transactions. In the prosecution of the exciting employment, its disastrous nature was forgotten, and he daily rose from his long-continued labours, as satisfied and rejoiced, as if profit, reward, and honour, were to be the result of all the patient toil. And were they not to be? What gain, what recompense, what dignity could his upright and manly understanding acknowledge superior to those which would follow the acknowledgment and publication of his unblemished character? I knew nothing of accounts; but I was happy beyond expression in the mechanical work which I was enabled to perform, and in the steady application which was so gratifying to my untiring parent. Many times, in the casting up of a long line of figures, a sudden thought of my poor dear mother would check the upward progress of my pen, dissipate the carefully accumulated numbers, and mingle drops of sacred water with the dry and hardened ink; but the inspiriting and in-

cessant occupation saved me from many bitter reflections, and tended to break the fall of a calamity, which otherwise I could ill have borne. My father was fairly roused by the advancement and extent of our labours, and he displayed an exuberant, an almost childish gladness in the pursuit of his object, that permitted not the intrusion of extraneous thoughts. He spoke not of my mother: but my faithful adherence and unflinching constancy drew from him the most fervent expressions of affectionate gratitude. "I was a noble boy—he forgave me everything—he was sure that I would keep my plighted word. God would prosper my exalted efforts, and we should all three meet again in heaven—reunited." After we had been a few days together, he could not bear me to leave his sight. If circumstances called me away for a few minutes, I heard him, abandoning his work, move immediately from his seat, walk impatiently about the room, and at last hasten to the door, and there listen for my return: if it were postponed for a minute longer, he either called my name repeatedly and anxiously, or himself sought me, wherever he thought me most likely to be found.

Our work was at length completed, and nothing could exceed the transport of my poor father when he contemplated and devoured with his eyes the long-expected and remunerating result. A lucid statement of all his affairs during the seven years preceding his failure was given in a few pages, and references were made from these to his books, in such a manner, that, in an instant, any single transaction during the entire period could be arrived at, and then subjected to the severest inquiry. His balance-sheet, in which his losses were accounted for, and were shown to proceed, not from improvidence or fraudulency, but from the sudden and unlooked-for fluctuations of a foreign trade—from the insolvency, in fact, of other parties—he gloated over with an admiration and pride that contrasted strangely with the deep feeling of mortification and shame with which he had a few days before dwelt upon his social degradation. He carried these papers about with him as a protection and passport against the rude enquiries of enemies and strangers, as though he deemed himself unsafe without them, passing through a land of calumny with the universal eye of suspicion constantly upon him. Little need be said of the gala-day—for such it was to him—on which he underwent the close scanning of his creditors, and passed with honour through the fiery ordeal. One circumstance connected with it cannot, however, be omitted. It has to do with Mr. Levy. Like all other dreaded things that sooner or later arrive at their full growth, my unfortunate bill of a hundred pounds came gradually and safely to maturity. Mr. Levy, in his own phrase, "sought me high and low," and not finding me, at last proceeded to assert his claims upon my goods and chattels. The tutor of the college contested the good man's right; the latter held up the strong arm of the law, and plea and counter-plea had been briskly fired, when my father's failure saved further shots, by carrying the settlement into other hands. The creditors opposed the claim of Mr. Levy upon the ground of my minority, and my consequent inability to contract the debt. That worthy gentleman met the general opposition with a poetical invention, beautifully conceived, but somewhat badly executed. When I entered the room with my father upon the day of his examination, three objects caught my notice. The first was Levy, *père*, sitting upon a stool, and biting his nails with much anxiety; the second was young Master Isaac, sitting near him, loaded with account-books to his chin; the third was a dark-visaged gentleman, made in the same mould as Levy senior, looking very shrewd and cunning, but taking some pains to invest his features with a veil of unconscious innocence, not

thick enough to answer its design. As I passed the youthful Ikey, my shins were favoured with a violent kick. I turned upon the boy, and the young fiend was feigning sleep upon a ledger. All other questions being disposed of, Mr. Levy's claim was last to be considered. His name was called, and my old friend rose.

"Give me dem books, my boy," were the first accents of that well-known voice.

"Stay!" said a perk and new-fledged barrister, employed to grapple with the well-trained Levy—"Stay, we may dispense with books."

"As you please. I vants to prove my lawful debt. You needn't try to bother me; I've got my vitnesses."

The plea of minority was then advanced. The learned gentleman spoke mysteriously, and rather episodically, for about an hour, and concluded by saying, that the bankrupt's son being an infant, the chattels in question had been *de facto* the chattels of the bankrupt, and were now *de jure* the chattels of the assignees, they themselves being the *locum tenentes* of the creditors at large. Having uttered which words he resumed his seat with a smile of content. Mr. Levy begged permission to introduce a very credible witness, who had been present when the bankrupt's son had distinctly averred that he was twenty-five years of age, upon the faith of which statement he, Mr. Levy, had at length raised the loan, and now relied upon the satisfaction of his claim. His witness was desired to appear; Master Isaac stood up, and my hair stood on end. Ikey, however, was not in a good humour.

"How old are you, boy?" enquired the lawyer.

"I don't know," said the imp.

"Oh, indeed! Perhaps you'll know something else. What is an oath?"

"Why, nothink at all to si'nify.

"Oh, it isn't, isn't it?" enquired the lawyer with great acuteness. "This is your witness, Mr. Levy, eh? Oh, oh! ha, ha! Now, mark and listen, boy. If an oath is nothing to signify, what is it not to signify?" The gentleman adjusted his wig and gown, both of which had been startled out of their propriety by the previous display of his eloquence.

"Oh, that's all very fine, mister!" replied the impertinent chip of Mosaic; "come to the point, and let us swear. You'll believe me then; and if I don't, you won't."

"What's your name, my sweet youth?" asked the lawyer, very politely.

"Isaac Levy," responded the boy.

"And do you think, Isaac Levy, that there is such a place as hell?"

"Oh, don't I neither?" returned Ikey, with quickness. "Why, where do you think all the lawyers go to?"

The counsellor stopped, and forthwith enquired whether more was needed to prove the ignorance of the witness in respect of the awful nature of an oath. He was answered in the negative, and young Ikey was dismissed. Mr. Levy, by no means discouraged, stepped forward, and explained how he had taken all possible pains to secure his debt; that he had even sent a gentleman to London, to announce to the bankrupt the sum he intended to advance his son, that the bankrupt had sanctioned the loan, and was aware of the security that had been taken. The respectable gentleman who had waited upon the bankrupt was now present, and prepared to take his oath to these facts; and when he had done so, Mr. Levy fervently hoped that "nobody vouldn't vish him to be kept no longer out of his rights." This witness was summoned to the box. Levy's double briskly jumped into it, and my father's grey hairs became ten years whiter

with surprise. The witness nodded in an affectionate manner to the bankrupt, whom, I need not say, he had never seen before.

Unfortunately for the persevering Levy, it was proved that my parent was five hundred miles from home at the time of the transaction. Whilst a witness was in the act of showing this beyond all doubt, Levy, finding the atmosphere too close and oppressive, took the opportunity to enjoy a little fresh air. Ikey and the books sneaked after him. The dark gentleman, less nimble, waited just long enough to be detained and given into custody, upon a charge of wilful perjury.

True it is, that my father was dismissed with honour, but not less true, without a penny in the world. His stock, his furniture, his all, were disposed of by public auction. His house passed into strange hands. He stood naked in life, with the juice of forty years' industry and mental energy drawn from him. After all his buffeting with the waves of fortune, to have advanced not one inch towards the haven he aspired to—it was a gloomy thought;—to be hurled back upon the stony shore, hacked and torn, old, powerless, and spent—that was harder still! But he did not murmur. He was subdued and humble. Patience was left him yet; he had preserved it from the general wreck; it identified him with his former self. Beyond it, what was there now remaining of the once cheerful and successful merchant? My father had now to look about for a place of refuge. He secured a small ill-furnished attic in one of the city's narrowest lanes. I had strongly urged him to rent an apartment away from London—in one of the suburbs—at a distance from old scenes and painful recollections; but he would not be persuaded. "This will never do," he said; "we must strangle in the birth, not nurse and strengthen, these cowardly apprehensions. I love the city's noise and bustle. I should die at once away from it." When my father had placed into the hands of his creditors, amongst other things, the gold watch he had worn for half a century, the latter was immediately returned to him. He converted it without delay to money, reserved a few guineas for our most pressing wants, and handed the residue to me, for the purpose of buying at the sale of his furniture a few matters that had belonged to my mother, the idea of losing which had cost him sharper pangs than the real loss of every other earthly thing. When he left me to take possession of his poor lodging, I hastened to the auction.

Gentle, happy reader—happy in the endearments of your sweet fireside, sustained in gladsome confidence by the bright smiles of your abiding household deities—if you have suffered to creep and twine about your heart the things of home—if with you they have grown old, and with your strength have gained a mightier hold upon your ripe affections—if the mysterious spirit that links the human soul with dumb and lifeless things, hath made and kept you *one*, beware the cruel hour of *separation*. So sure it comes, so sure you yield a vital portion of yourself no surgery can renew, no time can reinstate. How my blood crawled and my flesh winced, as the irreverent hand of strangers tossed and turned about the articles of furniture which I had known, revered from infancy! how their rude and heartless merriment, provoked by the appearance of some curious and much-cared-for relic of my dear mother's, stung me with a mingled sense of sorrow, shame, and anger! how their inhuman observations fell like iron on my heart and crushed it! A number of school-books were offered in one lot for sale. They had been mine when I was under the care of the good clergyman. How familiar were their well-used backs, scrawled and scribbled over, and what a fair scene for a moment did they evoke, carrying me back to the holidays of life, and permitting one passing

gleam of joy and innocence undisturbed to stray across my soul—too soon to vanish! "Pity," exclaimed a vulgar, ever-talking huckster, the merryman of the party; "pity the old man didn't read his books a little better! He should have kept at school a few years longer." And he laughed at his own coarse wit, which many of the company praised highly. I could not execute my commission, but left the place inflamed with indignation.

I joined my parent in his new abode, and discovered him bending over the fire, busy in the preparation of our dinner. It consisted of a few potatoes; and amusing would it have been, under any other circumstances, to listen to the arguments which he employed to recommend the very homely meal. "He could have procured a richer dish, had he not considered the paramount importance of attending to the health. We were now idle—the simplest diet gave strength to those whose bodies suffered no expenditure—stimulating food induced derangement and disease—we could ill afford to pay the doctor now. Prevention of malady was the point he aimed at; we had never regarded this sufficiently before. It was time to look about. The Arabs lived on rice. In truth, the finest creatures in the world were the most moderate." Such were the observations that he poured, by way of relish, over the scanty and otherwise ill-seasoned fare. I agreed with him most cordially, and I was then "a boy of rare wisdom for my years, and undoubtedly on the high road to fortune and success." Ah, poor father! why, in the height of all thy panegyrics, rise from the table, and shuffle so quickly to the window? Why hum those ineffectual notes? Why so secretly extract that handkerchief, and carry it to thy cheek? In spite of thy shrewd reasoning, is it so difficult to bring conviction *home?* Thy case is not a novel one.

The desperate state of our affairs had not as yet plucked my courage from me. I saw the necessity of labouring for my livelihood, and prepared myself immediately for employment. There were but two of us; surely with health and reason I could do something for our support. I could become a clerk—a teacher in a school; there was nothing which I would not gladly undertake to render the last days of my father smooth and peaceful. I communicated my intention to him. Whilst he did not object to my determination, he evinced no pleasure at it. "I do not see the necessity of your leaving me, Caleb," he said; "I can hardly spare you, and I think we have enough to live upon."

"We have four guineas in the world, father," I replied, "which will last us about as many weeks."

"Is it so?" he asked with a confused and vacant air. "True, true, I had forgotten—they have taken all." And, having cause for tears, he smiled. Melancholy omen!

I walked into the world with confident steps, sanguine, fortified with youthful freshness. It was a smiling morning of early spring, and buxom and glad as the whole earth appeared, leaping from cold and lethargy, there existed not a more cheerful and ardent nature than mine, when it looked abroad, throbbing with hope and satisfaction. I could not doubt that there were many in the world as ready to secure my services, as I was willing to make the offer of them. Sure I was that I had but to present myself as a candidate for employment in the vast market-place of human industry, in order to be greedily accepted. The days of early spring are not remarkable for length, and yet many hours before the sun had dipped into the west, all my brilliant expectations had, by degrees, declined, and waned, and quite expired. Brighter than the sun at noon were my views at daybreak; darker than the sun at midnight were my

hopes at eve. Nobody would hire me. I returned to our poverty-struck habitation more depressed than I had ever been, with a keener sense of our abandoned helpless state than I had ever ventured to conceive. Not the less deeply did I feel our sorrows when my father met my dejected countenance with wild expressions of delight. A child may gambol by its mother's corpse. Innocence forgives the inconsistency, and we are grateful that the gloomy thought of death is all too ponderous for the infant soul; but when the *man* shall laugh at human misery and the wrath of Heaven, be sure his direst woe is that which moved him to his mirth—insanity is *there*.

My father was busy with pen and paper when I returned from my unsuccessful wanderings. At his side was a dish of tea, that had been prepared, apparently, some hours before; near him an uncut loaf of bread; close to the fireplace was his tea-pot; the fire itself was out. A candle, whose wick had not been snuffed since it first was kindled, burned on the table with dull and sullen aspect. Around him, and on the ground, were many papers, written, blotted, and scrawled upon. He greeted me, and extreme enjoyment played in every feature; but he checked himself and me, held up his pen to compel my silence and arrest my progress, lest the motion of my tongue and feet might disturb and baulk the fit expression of some luminous idea with which his mind seemed big. He wrote some passages in haste, and then he stopped. "Well, Caleb," he began, his aged eyes sparkling with unusual animation—"you have failed. I am sure of it. Your looks tell me so. You will not desert your father?"

"I have indeed failed," I answered. "I have been most unfortunate."

"No, Caleb, not when you know all. You are fortunate, very fortunate. You will say so too. Shut the door, lad. I have such a secret to communicate!" I obeyed him, and he beckoned me to the table, and placed his finger slowly and solemnly upon his papers. "A mine of wealth!" he exclaimed; "we shall be richer than ever." I was about to take the papers, when he detained my hand. "Not yet, not yet, Caleb. You must promise not to divulge what is written, until everything is secure. It is all for you. I shall not live to have the fruition, but you will. I have tortured my brain to make you rich. I am very sorry that you hesitate to promise me. It is wrong of you, Caleb; but you will be the sufferer—not I."

"Your request is a law with me, father," I replied. "I will do as you bid me."

"Of course you will," he added with a cunning laugh. "We are not so foolish in this world as to fly in the face of our best interests. That is very clever of you, Caleb. There, feast your eyes upon the golden prospect." He placed triumphantly a sheet of paper in my hand, and bade me read from it aloud. The characters were very large, and had been written with an unsteady pen. I read the following announcement: "*The secret discovered, or, transmutation no dream, showing the method of converting the inferior metals into gold.*" "Yes—that's it, that's it!" he ejaculated, rubbing his hands—"that's the title! It came to me this morning. I have got the process in my head, but I cannot make it clear on paper. You are a scholar, Caleb—you shall help me. It's a simple operation, and cannot fail. When we have written it out, we'll begin. When I was a boy, Caleb, I dreamed that I should keep my carriage. I thought I had lost it when they tore our bed away—who wouldn't have thought it then? But the dream's out now. Your mother was a rare believer in old dreams. Ask her what she thinks of this."

Many slight inconsistencies in my father's conduct had alarmed me a few days previously to this sad outbreak; but I was not prepared for what

I witnessed. Overcome with astonishment and grief, I remained silent, imploring inwardly the avenging hand of Heaven not to spare me, but to hurl me quickly into the general ruin to which our house was doomed.

"You see, Caleb," continued my afflicted parent, "that you are not allowed to leave your father. You were obstinate, but a miracle has stayed you. Why I have been chosen from the millions of mankind to penetrate this long dormant mystery, I cannot tell now; but even this will be revealed in its own good time. In the meanwhile we will show ourselves mindful of our privileges. Who knows but I am sent to purify the world —to enrich it first, and then to free it from pollution?" He ceased not here, but advanced from one diseased imagining to another, soaring higher and higher in absurdity, as his hot and eager fancy rioted in liberty, until at length, caught and entangled in a maze of images, he stopped, failing to extricate himself, unable to proceed. I dared not leave him again. Had I desired it, he would not have permitted my departure; but, on my own part, I deemed it wrong to abandon him to the perverse guidance of an irresponsible judgment. His days and nights were passed in the working out of his *great idea*, as he denominated it, and nothing might interfere with its steady prosecution. I, who was destined to profit so largely by this discovery, was not permitted to stand idly by. "It would be," he said, "contrary to every law of nature, and against all notions of justice, to think of passiveness. The harvestman must use his sickle, or he cannot reap." Accordingly, I remained, day after day, and hour after hour, at my poor father's side, sometimes writing from his dictation, and delighting him by attempts to clothe in language that might be understood, ideas which were not intelligible in themselves, and sometimes copying, in a clear and legible hand, the many pages which he had composed during the long and silent nights, whilst I was sleeping. It is unnecessary to say that his incessant labour yielded not even the blossom of a wholesome fruit. Idle repetitions, the continual evolving of a few thoughts, through whose dark covering of mysteriousness might with difficulty be traced the kernel of a simple and well-known truth, were the produce of all his brain-work; and yet, for this, rest, air, exercise, and needful food, were but too gladly sacrificed. He continued his employment until the last guinea which we could call our own reminded me of the inevitable destitution towards which we were fast advancing. I communicated our condition to my father, in the hope of eliciting one rational intention, if he still held one, with respect to our proceedings.

"Is it the last indeed?" he asked. "How wonderful are the ways of Providence! We have the means of support up to the very moment when we can part with them. Our last guinea will hold out a week longer, and then we shall be ripe for action. This day week, Caleb, shall be an eventful day for you. You will remember it with reason to the last hour of your life."

My father spoke the truth. It was a day never to be forgotten. It stands by itself, flowing like a turbulent river through the plain of my existence, connecting and dividing the life that has followed since, with, and from, the life that went before. He had taken no rest for many nights preceding it; and when it dawned, its first grey gleaming light might easily have settled on his feverish brow without awakening there a consciousness of its approach. His mind was swallowed up in his one great purpose, and day and night, with their vicissitudes and fluctuations, disturbed him not. He was above the common doings of the world. Do we pity the poor lunatic, stripped of his wits, dismembered from the social body, exiled and hid in solitary secret corners? Yes, but not half

so proudly as the poor lunatic, in his borrowed majesty, looks down and pities and despises *us*. The little method that had lingered in my father's composition had entirely vanished. His intellect was running riot, and he wrote and wrote on, without connexion, meaning, aim. He was bewildered; but he still blotted the paper, and was more persevering than ever. I left him for a short time, in order to purchase our dinner at a neighbouring shop. Upon my return, I discovered him sitting, as when I had left him, at the table, pen in hand; but his eyes were fixed, not upon his papers, but upon the ceiling, and he appeared absorbed in thought. A thick sunbeam, with its countless particles, danced from the ceiling to the floor, and darting athwart his countenance, lit every feature up with white and paly fire; but it passed powerless across the madman's eye. *That* did not shrink or move, but, like a star, shone against the luminous stream. My father heard my footstep, but did not stir.

"Is that you, Caleb?" he enquired, in a gentle voice.

"Yes, father," I answered, "and I have brought you a dish that you are fond of. You must be ready for it."

"Bring candles, my dear," said my father in reply, "it is very dark. Night has taken us by surprise. Lights, Caleb, lights!"

I complied with his request. Throughout his illness I had taken pains to gratify and soothe him, by a ready compliance with his wishes. Why should I not humour the new delusion? Alas, alas! it was impossible to misinterpret the inefficient and endeavouring motions of his hand when I again approached him. Nor candle, nor lamp, nor the blessed light of heaven, could serve him more. Whether the aged eyes of the afflicted man had been bruised or injured in their recent bondage, or whether suddenly the kind hand of Providence, with a wise intent, had put a seal upon them, I could not tell. Blind-stricken he was, and—with his reason gone—more helpless than a child. My poor heart fluttered as I led him to his bed. Clustering woes had fallen upon me—it was hard to stand the brunt. My dear father was patient and submissive in my hands. He knew not the extent of his calamity. "He wondered why the night had come so quickly—he wished that it would go, and leave him to his work again." Having placed him as comfortably as I might upon the bed which was nightly made upon the floor, I secured without delay the assistance of a doctor. One, to whom I was directed, and who lived not far from our lane, accompanied me home. He examined his patient carefully, and departed, promising to send the necessary medicine. I followed the doctor to the street door, and, with much anxiety, asked if there was any danger.

"From the blindness, do you mean?" he asked. "I could make your mind easy if we had nothing to contend with but that. Unfortunately, however, this blindness is the effect of even a more threatening mischief."

"He is very quiet," I responded quickly.

"Yes, I wish he were less so. I am very much afraid——"

"Oh no, no!" I exclaimed, clasping my hands, and weeping bitterly; "do not say that, sir—there can be no danger. It is so very sudden. You have had similar cases, have you not?"

"I have."

"And they recovered?"

"I must not deceive you. They have not."

"What shall I do, sir? If I lose him I lose all. I haven't another friend in the wide world. This is punishment indeed!"

"I shall send the medicine at once," said the doctor, without noticing my passion, "and I will see him again during the night. You will sit up

with him, of course. Don't leave him. Should he become much weaker and appear to sink, let me know."

"Give me some little hope," I cried imploringly.

"You hear what I have said," continued the practitioner; "don't forget. Good-day."

And he left me marvelling at the insensibility of mankind.

I sat at my parent's side for many hours. In spite of the doctor's sad assurances, I could not believe in the presence of immediate danger. I would not believe in it. The streets were full of human voices and the hum of busy life, when I drew my chair towards him, and surveyed his pale and placid countenance. There was talking and bustling, without and within, on the pavement under our window, upon the stairs in the house, everywhere but in our own dark chamber of misfortune, where silence, chased and affrighted from the world, kept company with sickness. Now the lamps in the street were lighted, and the stream of life was more distinctly heard, murmuring along. Artisans were returning from their daily toil, gay and care-free. Bells were rung and knockers hammered with scarce an interval of repose. What wholesome well-earned food awaited the healthful appetite! What welcome from loving eyes of wife and children! Happy labourers! And now the hours of night came on, and the feverish pulse of the great thoroughfare beat with diminished force. By degrees the street became deserted—the crowds had disappeared—Silence had ventured forth again. How, at times, she was offended and disturbed, you might plainly tell, when some belated and excited rambler pierced her modest ear with the licentious scream of wantonness and inebriety; but the repetition was infrequent, and ceased at length. The heavy breathings of the poor blind man were soon the loudest sounds of life. He neither spoke nor slept—his lips were moving ever, and he drew and pressed them close, as though he thirsted. I did not deem it necessary to send for the physician; but I grew impatient, and often hurried to the window to watch for his arrival. It was four o'clock; the moon shone beautifully clear, and graced our narrow lane with its full share of silver light. I looked into the slumbering street, and ruminated on the past. What a retrospect! And what a future! The history of a few short months had been a fearful one. The history of the time to come, who could decide, encompass *that!* Thoughts of my lost mother—lost to me *for ever*—did not fail to come, and in the sweet serenity of night to thrill me with emotion. I looked to the transparent sky—the homestead of the pure—*her* dwelling-place, and, in the pang and conflict of remorse, implored the Saint to pardon me. Since ten o'clock I had heard, at the close of every half hour, the watchman's voice, chronicling the lapse of time. Some dozen times his loud and chanting tone had returned upon my ear, and then the voice had grown familiar as a voice that had been known from infancy. So long it seemed since I had heard the accents first, that I could scarcely fix their earliest beginning. With the announcement of the decease of four o'clock, a coach and pair rattled up the lane. It stopped before our door, and it discharged the doctor. He was in full dress. A diamond ring glittered on his finger, and his clothes were redolent of strong perfume.

"You haven't sent for me?" he asked, as he brushed by me, and hastened up stairs.

"I have not, sir," I replied.

"No—I should have heard of it. I have been at a ball, and I desired your messenger, if he came, to be sent after me. How is your father now?"

"I cannot perceive a change, sir—But you will see."

We entered the room together. My father was sitting up in bed. A strange alteration had come over him. He was ghastly pale, and his features were pinched up and angular. He drew his breath with difficulty.

"How is this?" enquired the doctor, running to his side and examining his pulse. My father's lips moved quickly and convulsively. I imagined that he endeavoured to pronounce my name. I traced the half formation of the word, but could not catch the sound of it. The doctor released the hand, and walked from the bedside. My father spoke. It was a last, a struggling effort, and he succeeded. "Caleb, lights—lights!—dark—dark—dark!"—and he grew rigid, and he slipped from my embrace until he lay motionless and dead before me.

Of all the calamities incident to our present state, (and their name is legion,) there is none more exquisitely painful to the sensitive mind, than that of being left in the world a solitary outcast, without a tie, without a hope. Wo to the poor orphan, deprived of the head that considered, the heart that throbbed for him! wo to him when the goodly tree—his only prop from childhood, against which he has reclined as against a rock that never could be shaken—is struck at the root, falls, and disappears! Let him take the wings of the morning, and search through the land for a spirit loving and watchful as that which is flown, upon whose willing bosom were so lightly borne *his* solicitudes and sorrows, and all the weight of anxious care he cast without a thought there. Father and mother! Holy names, with claims which are so seldom understood and recognised until the desire and power to meet them can no longer serve us. Nurse of our infancy—instructor of our boyhood—adviser of our youth—friend of our manhood—staff and support throughout—what is not comprehended in your relationship! How much do your children owe you! Let them answer as they sob at the deathbed, and learn their loss in feeling what they need. As I held the cold hand of my deceased father, how many cruel deviations from filial duty rushed to my mind, crowding one after another upon my memory, which I would now have given my right hand never to have been guilty of. What tribulation I might have spared him! Now an unkind word spoken in impatience many years ago, and forgotten as soon as spoken, started to remembrance, stinging me with remorse. Why had I not implored forgiveness for that word before? What sorrow may the utterance of that one syllable have caused him, falling on his warm heart, and rankling there! What profited my burning tears of penitence?—the eye was closed, the ear was shut; there was no avenue by which to reach him now. "Oh yes!" I passionately exclaimed, dropping on my knees, "there is, there is!—if the departed soul, bursting, as I have been told, its earthly house, ascends at once to heaven, surely he is at this moment there, and is accessible by prayer. Father," I continued, weeping amain, "I supplicate thy pardon for the past—I repent my numerous crimes committed against thee here. Turn not thy spirit from me. Let it accept in mercy the contrite offerings of a broken heart." A knock at the door interrupted the extravagant devotion. Two women, who came to perform the first offices for the dead, entered the room with a slow step, and whispering. I shall never forget the chill that crept through my frame when I heard them refer for the first time to "*the corpse.*" Such isolation was expressed in the word—the reality of death was so apparent in it—it marked so distinctly the abstraction of all human relations, and separated so emphatically my poor father from every living thing! The crawling worm was now a nobler animal than the motionless and rigid man. I had beheld the previous day's decline. I had seen the earth go gradually to

rest. Another day was in its birth. The early labourer went forth again refreshed and cheerful. He whistled as he passed my window. What thought had he of my bereavement? What single heart, of the numberless thousands that were about to congregate again, would beat with pity for my loss? with sorrow for my melancholy lot? NOT ONE! There was no sympathy for the beggared orphan.

PART VI.

MY MOTHER'S LETTER.

"Once more unto the breach!"—*Henry V.*

FOR a week I remained in the chamber of death, the undisturbed companion of the breathless body. The face was leaden-hued, but a smile adorned it still; and the blow that had extinguished life had restored the ancient and appropriate calm, which, many days before, anxiety and disease of mind had carried off. At the week's close they buried him. Oh! Earth, thou art the enemy at last. It is thou who swallowest the treasure, never to give it back again in a form that we may recognise; thou who dividest us from the beloved, more truly and emphatically than the great adversary of life himself. I knew not half my loss, nursing and beguiling it from day to day at the bedside. *There* I might yet survey—*there* I had still possession of my *father*. A new relationship had sprung up between us; and morning and evening, and at mid-day, blessed intimations of heavenly comfort were gathered upon my knees, reconciling me to the *spirit's* absence, whilst the human throbbings of my heart were stilled and cozened by the palpable presence of the decaying frame. Cold, cruel, pitiless earth!—deaf witness of my cries, cutting me off from him, my last and only friend, holding him in clammy and in fixed constriction—what cared you for the wild agony of the outstretched eye, staring upon the narrow spot that covered him?—what for the frantic and incoherent exclamations that expressed a loss and separation never felt but once in all their fullness, and never yet made known in human speech?

It was dark when I walked from the churchyard. I departed when the night permitted me no longer to distinguish the few sacred feet of soil from the thousand patches in which I had no interest. I returned to our abject lodging—never so abject, never so miserable, never so desolate as now. I had no wish to remain its tenant any longer. I passed a woful night there—now starting from a hideous dream, that clung to me through all the hours of sleep—now waking with a piercing cry, and now with eyes filled with bitterest tears; and in the morning, without delay, I took a willing leave of it for ever. The few valued memorials of my dear mother, which my father had snatched with such eagerness from the wreck, I had been most reluctantly compelled to dispose of even before his death. We were penniless when the physician first visited us. The payment of his fee, and of the small arrear of rent, reduced the sum obtained for these precious relics to something like one guinea. The possessor of so much treasure, I stood now in the world alone, without a wish or hope, without

a purpose or an aim. The daily diminution of my fund soon filled me with uneasiness and alarm, urging me, ineffectually enough, to think of some reasonable mode of obtaining my subsistence. Again I passed from house to house soliciting employment, and again I returned to my new and cheerless home, disappointed and chagrined. Stranger than anything seemed this difficulty of obtaining hire for services that were offered at any price the purchaser would afford. How had the thousands of well-dressed and busy individuals whom I encountered at every turn, with happy and industrious looks—how had they contrived originally to fix themselves in their present lucrative positions? What secret power of accomplishing their wishes did they possess, which I had yet to learn? Or was it, in truth, that every profitable hole and nook in the mighty city was filled up—pre-occupied and secured? I could not explain my misfortune, but I still wondered at it, and still was doomed to bear it. At length, and at no distant period, my purse was exhausted, and I was compelled to procure my food upon credit, and to live on trust in my one small ill-furnished room. I had been careful, so long as my means permitted it, to pay my rent punctually at the close of every week. The landlord of the house, a labouring man, himself living in the parlour, had always treated me with great civility in consequence, and few words had passed between us. Whether it was that this good gentleman, during the week which I had permitted to pass away without the usual settlement, had observed a falling-off in my manner of living—had remarked that two scanty meals, and oftener one, had served me through the day—and, with such data, had arrived at a knowledge of my real position; or, whether the landlord in the same exigency adopted one line of conduct towards all his tenants without favour or reserve, I was not able to determine. Certain it is, that three days of a second week had not elapsed before he deemed me worthy of a visit. I was glad to see him, and so I told him; but he spoke his business without returning my salute.

"Look'e, Mr. Stukely," said the man of rooms, "I don't mean no offence; and if I am plain-spoken, I am none the worse for that. You owe me one week's rent—next Monday you'll owe me two. If you have no likeliwoods of paying me, only say so like a man."

I blushed and could not speak.

"If you are regularly done up, you had better owe me a fortnight than four months, I can tell you. Speak in time—it's all I ask, and then I sha'n't be hard. You are out of work, I see?"

"Yes," I answered.

"And are likely enough to keep so?"

"Yes," said I again.

"And you haven't got a blessed farden?"

I nodded in the negative.

"Of course—as nat'ral and as reg'lar as the rule of three. It's Pill Garlick's luck again—it's just like me—I'm in for it again. Now, young fellow, we'll make short work of this. If you pays on Monday—well and good—and we goes on again like friends and pitchers; if you can't, tip me the key, give me the room, take yourself off, and I'll cry quits, and give you a bob to begin life again. If you haven't the stuff, it's plain you can't give it; but I'm blessed if it's a good speculation to keep on at the price. You *are* done up, you see. Now, I ain't just yet, and don't want to be."

There was a man, a member of Trinity College, to whom, during my residence in the university, I had, in more ways than one, rendered signal service. He knew it, at least in prosperous days he had acknowledged it,

and had evinced a willingness to make a suitable return. Even as my landlord spoke, his repeated grateful recognitions returned upon my memory, and I decided in my difficulty to implore from him a temporary loan of money. Satisfied that from such a man I could not meet with a refusal, I replied to my landlord in the following terms: "I am very grateful to you, Mr. Thompson, for your kind offer. I trust I shall not need to take advantage of it; but rest assured, you shall suffer no further trouble or loss upon my account. It is true, I am not in a condition to pay you, nor am I in the way of earning a single halfpenny. But I do believe sincerely that I have a friend who will not see me want. I will write to him by this night's post, and request his answer by return. He will remit me immediately more than sufficient to discharge your debt. Should he fail, although I have no fear of such a thing, I will go, as you require, on Monday next, or, if you wish it, on an earlier day."

"No, no," answered Thompson, eagerly, "not before. I'm a man of my word—I'm devilish sorry for you—that's the truth; for I am sure, by the way you talk, you have not been used to this here sort of thing. You have had an eddication, too, I can see; but, let me tell you, it's deuced hard upon me. Here, I have a wife and ten children, and my old woman's always going to bed; and here have I five-and-forty pounds a-year to pay for this ramshackled dungeon; and here are my lodgers invariably paying me five shillings in the pound—never more than one week out of four; and here's the tax-gatherer a-coming before I know where I am; and here's wages at the shop coming down, 'cause business is slack; and here's clothes to buy for the young uns; and the doctor to pay for missus; and the baker, with bread a-rising, 'cause there's a war. No, I pity you, Mr. Stukely; but we must take care of ourselves. I sha'n't worry you; but if you can't get the money—God knows it's very hard to get any now—just give us the key to let in them as can. You had better see what you can do—try and get work—don't depend upon your friends—friends is a misery to a fellow. I never knew 'em to give—they are the chaps as takes. Try what you can do for yourself; and as I said before, if you can't do nothink at all, wait till Monday week——"

"Until Monday," said I, interrupting him.

"Don't interfere. I know very well what I said—wait till Monday week, an' welcome; and then, money or no money, hand us over the key, and do the best you can—that's what we must all do at last—and there's an end of it." And saying these words he slapped his hands with some violence on the table, and departed immediately. Not until he had reached his own room did I discover that the slapping was a species of legerdemain, performed for the purpose of placing half-a-crown upon the table for my benefit, but without my knowledge. I proceeded to my letter, a sceptic in respect of the tales which I had so often heard touching hard-hearted landlords. I did not conceal the state of my affairs from my good friend, Myddleton. I explained to him that my father had died, and had left me in the world penniless. I pictured to him my present terrible situation—related to him the scene that had taken place with Thompson, and conjured him by the friendship which had formerly existed between us, not to desert me at a moment when a little help might prove my very salvation. I was moderate in my demand. I asked the loan only of ten pounds. I could not fix the time of repayment, but I solemnly engaged to return it as soon as I obtained employment, and became master of the sum. Every term that might move a feeling heart to pity and to help—every appeal that friendship might receive and humanity respond to, I unhesitatingly employed. With some anxiety and

interest I waited for the returning post. A hundred times before I had heard the postman's distinguishable knock, and little thought of the accumulated joy and misery of which he was the unconscious messenger. Now I honoured him for the dignity of his high office. I learned the usual hour of his entrance into the street, watched his arrival, and accosted him as soon as he appeared. Quickly, and somewhat angrily, he turned his letters over, and found——not one for Mr. Stukely. Was I satisfied? Oh no! I was sure that he had passed the letter over—What was to be expected from the impatient motions of a testy man? He would come to my letter in its usual course, and I must wait, like other folks, quietly at home for its reception. Ah, I was right—there was the delicious double knock! I rushed to the street door. The letter was for Mr. Watkins on the second floor. Two mornings passed. The postman was as punctual as the sun. I performed the same excited part. I met with like success. Monday came. I thought no more of Myddleton, but I cursed myself for writing to the man. I was preparing for departure—whither to go, I neither knew nor cared. Reckless with regard to myself, I determined upon living no longer upon the charity of Thompson. Hark! the double knock again. Well, let them attend to it who are to profit by the summons—not I. What's that? Surely, that's my name. *Hollo—stop there!* ——Thompson met me halfway on the stairs—There it was indeed—I knew the hand—oh, shame upon me! ungrateful and impatient ever—I had done injustice to the noble Myddleton. I broke the seal with vehemence. The letter was a long one—but there was no enclosure. Let us read. I read as follows:—

"Dear Stukely—I have long thought it to be my fault that our friendship and correspondence closed with our residence in Cambridge. I feel obliged to you for breaking the ice, and I do sincerely hope that we shall now occasionally hear from one another. I should say that you were not a little surprised some months ago upon seeing in the papers that I had been ordained by the Bishop of ——; and rather curious to know how the matter had gone off, and where your friend was fixed. I'll tell you all about it. Our old friend, Cripple of Corpus, who, you will recollect, went out at the commencement of your second and my third year, was directed by Archdeacon Heavysides to look out for a curate. Cripple, of course, recommended me, and kindly prepared an application, which I copied out and sent. I was immediately accepted, and the Arch. hoped I would come down directly, look at the parish, and be introduced to the Bishop. I went—stayed up a week, and when I got home again, I had just ten days and a half to read my divinity up, and get into training before I could come to the scratch. However, everything turned out remarkably well; Cripple put me up to the *viva voce*, and told me the Bishop's favourite authors. As for the Bishop, I don't exaggerate when I say he is one of the most gentlemanly men in the world—very kind and considerate, as I have reason to know, and one of the most simple-minded (Cripple calls it spoony-minded—but you know Cripple) men on the bench, or off it either—and very good-looking as well. I can assure you it is a very comfortable thing to have examinations over, and very glad was I when my ordination was finished. It is a very affecting service, and the sermon is awful. Chancellor Scollups preached it. Next thing to be done is the priest business, and then all's over. I am as yet only a deacon. Thank Heaven that's the last examination! and then sha'n't I breathe like a gold fish! By-the-bye, perhaps you don't know that that word *priest* is a contraction or *presbyter*, afterwards *prester*, and then *priest*. I don't much like the word, because there's a black-looking rascal enjoying

that title, and a bristly head of hair, who walks about all day long trying to annoy my flock. A cunning dog he is! He has built a large school, and directly our church is over on Sunday he opens the doors, and delivers his lectures. Never mind. We are all right. The church was never better attended, and the opposition keeps up an excitement. But I'm sorry to say there's much to be done, especially as there is only one to do it, and that's me. There is no end to the parish, and some of the people won't know the only way to be saved, which is by coming to church, and so I am upon the everlasting run from morning till night. But '*nil nisi labori*,' as the ancient Romans have it. I preach once every Sunday. Last Sunday I preached for the pagans in Australasia (you'll find Asia in any of the maps). The collection was very good, £2 1*s.* 0½*d.*, 7*s.* 6½*d.* of which were in coppers, which Archdeacon Heavysides says, in one of his sermons, he prefers seeing to gold, which I can't understand at all, and think must be a misprint! Heavysides and the Bishop, between ourselves (don't mention it to any one), don't pull very comfortably together. Heavysides says that the R. C. Church is the true apostolic. The Bishop says it's no such thing, but neither more nor less than '*the man of sin*,' and there I agree with him. Heavysides has got some queer notions, as you see above, touching the coppers. Oh! didn't I just give the priest a dig the other day! I gave out in the pulpit that I meant to preach, wind and weather permitting (for we shut up sometimes in the winter—it is so piercing cold), a sermon on the text, '*Be not deceived.*' I winked at the same time to the congregation, and pointed to the schism shop, which you can see from the church, giving them to understand pretty well what I meant. Well, the next day, who should call in but Bristles himself, and he presses my hand, and smiles, and says he has paid me a visit just to explain the liberal terms upon which he means to carry on his school—'most liberal terms,' cries Bristles—'no religion whatever—reading, writing, and morals—that's all.' Then I fired at him right and left, till he looked like a fool.—'I hope,' says he, 'we shall be friends.' 'What!' says I, 'friends with the Beast?—no; thank you, sir—nothing to do with you—come out of Babylon, will you?' 'Oh! you are for controversy, are you?' says he; 'very well then, my lad:' and then we went at it till the fellow foamed at the mouth, and the nasty wretch spit in my face, when I thought it time for a gentleman to bring the discussion to a close, which I did, by ringing the bell, and ordering him out. He's what they call in France, a perfect Jesuit.—Wishing that our correspondence, now recommenced, may long continue,—

"Your faithful friend,

"TOM MYDDLETON."

"Coldblows, Hampshire.

"P.S.—By the way, the account you give me of your circumstances is very shocking, and you have indeed been very much afflicted—I needn't tell you to be very careful of yourself. I wish sincerely that it were in my power to assist you even with a trifle. The poor in our parish would surprise you, and as for charities, they are beyond belief—so I won't describe them. What a delightful thing it is to feel, as Archdeacon Heavysides says, that we are chastened for our good, and that it's all wise and proper! Oh, do think of that, my dear fellow!"

Thompson shortly made his appearance, but there was no need to inform him of the contents of this choice epistle. He read the pith and postscript in my dejected countenance. I could not conceal my agitation

and the swelling tears that would not be kept down. I proceeded in the packing of my one small trunk.

"Stay the other week," said Thompson bluntly, but evidently feeling for my situation.

"Why should I? I shall be no better off than I am now, and you have lost enough already. But I will pay you, Thompson, when I can—depend upon it."

"But you can't go into the street, man—that's impossible. You'll get into trouble, or be doing something—Bless my soul, it seems strange you can't find employment! What's your profession?"

How could I answer!

"Don't be ashamed to tell me. P'r'aps you are a dancing-master. The last lodger as had your room was, and I catched him one morning dancing off afore breakfast without paying his rent—so I boned his fiddle for the money. I've got it below, if it's any use to you."

I was still silent.

"Haven't you got no relations?"

This abrupt question brought to my recollection a packet of my poor mother's papers, which, in the midst of my grief and remorse, I had completely forgotten. In this packet was a letter, written just before her death, to a cousin at Birmingham, enclosed in one to myself, solemnly enjoining me, should I ever stand in need of advice or assistance, to forward the former to the prosperous relative whom she had passed some time with in her early days. So earnestly and imploringly did she make this request, that at any time I should have felt it a sacred duty to comply with it; but now, when I found myself reduced to the last extremity, face to face with gaunt poverty, the welcome remembrance of this letter came upon me like a gleam of sunlight, illumining my spirit, and reanimating my sinking soul.

"Relations, Thompson!" I exclaimed. "How could I have forgotten my mother's cousin at Birmingham?"

"Now, there's where I find fault with you!" he exclaimed. "You don't seem to know what you are about. Is it possible that a man without a penny in his pocket should have his wits about him no better than a child? Why don't you go to them at once? If they are your own blood they can't see you starve."

"I'll write to-night."

"Ah! there you go again. Write! What's the use of writing? It's just the way with all of you. Talk of the misery of not being able to read or write! I'm blessed if it ain't a privilege. There's many a fellow will put upon paper what he'd be ashamed or afraid to say like a trump to your face."

"That's all very good, Thompson; but how am I to reach Birmingham penniless, as you justly describe me? I *must* write to them. At the same time I will forward my mother's letter, and beg them to send me money sufficient to convey me to them."

"Then, I can tell you, you'll do no good at all. Catch Brummagem sending money to buy himself an encumbrance. He'll make a hundred and fifty excuses to keep you away. I know the world better. First and foremost, you must find your way down to your uncle, or whatever he is. Tell him you have come, give him the letter—say plump 'you are starving,' set yourself down, and let him kick you out if he can. You are willing to work, and he must get you employment. I think I might manage it now. You'd be glad to travel by waggon, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, had I even the means for that."

"Well, but suppose I could find 'em. Or suppose I have a brother who takes the waggon to Coventry, and suppose we could get you first there, and afterwards to Brummagem, without any money at all. Finish your packing, and just let me have a word with the missus." The energetic Thompson departed, but quickly returned with Mrs. Thompson this time in the rear. "They had settled my business," said Thompson, "with ease. His brother would start for Coventry that night—he'd take care to secure me a place in the wain, and he'd lend me a crown to buy provisions. If I got into work, he'd expect to be paid—but if I had still my old luck, why, he shouldn't be ruined though he gave it to me. Isn't that right, old woman?" he asked in conclusion.

"Quite right, Thompson!" was his good lady's reply; "and do, for goodness' sake," she exclaimed, appealing to me, "give me those shirts to put tidy before you set out. There isn't a button on one of them. Oh, Thompson, what stockings too! Your relations will think you have been herding with heathens. Do give them here." And Mrs. Thompson disordered my trunk, and took possession of everything.

I joined these real friends at dinner: I partook of their tea. At night, when his labours were over, Thompson threw my trunk on his shoulders, and walked at my side to the Bull's Head, in Holborn. There we found the waggon lighted up, and ready for moving. There, likewise, we found, less ready, the waggoner himself, whip in hand, smock-frocked, and drinking stirrup-cups indiscriminately with every member of the establishment. No time was to be lost. My introduction was short. Thompson whispered a word into the ear of his brother, packed me into the waggon, forced into my hand a bottle of cordial, and a lump of cold meat, then desiring me to write how I got on, he bade me take care of myself, and wished me a hearty good-night.

My heart knocked at my breast with grateful emotion, as I watched the noble-spirited labourer running through the streets back to his own home—his genuine palace—where his wife and little ones, conscious of his worth, proud of their possession, awaited him with joy and sweetest expectation. "Happy dispenser of light and warmth, richer, in spite of all your daily cares, than you can dream of or can understand, may Heaven forget me, if I forget this sympathy for a stranger, this help that you can ill afford to take from those whose hope of life, whose bread, depends upon your sinewy arm!" Heavily the waggon issued from the yard into the crowded thoroughfare, and tears, which none but the Invisible might see, in deepest thankfulness to that humble man, passed down my cheek—stopping my utterance. Why, ah why, to embitter and poison that most healthful stream, came driving upon my conscience noxious recollections of the irremeable past? Why returned upon my memory, with all the freshness and vigour of a new existence, scenes of a former time, that mocked me, whilst they forced me to consider and to contrast them with that in which I acted now?

What was the claim of this poor man—found but yesterday—great as I acknowledged it to be, compared with that which I had recognised in her—the beloved giver of my life—my lost and sainted mother? In what passionate terms had I expressed my illimitable love when she was about to loose me into the world unwillingly from her arms? What vows of enduring reverence and duty did I not invoke the Heavenly One to witness, consecrating every syllable with tears more plenteous, hotter, and more innocent, than I had now to shed! How had I realised the abundant promise? Where was the fruit of all this goodly sowing? Sad, sad, and overwhelming recollection, dragging the crimson to my face, marking with

derision and contempt every burst of fancied sensibility, every tear of visionary gratitude! Truly, I had learned a lesson never to be forgotten, and in my loneliness I conned it over, and closed my lips, and ceased my tears—convicted, humbled, and disgraced!

Loud was the clink of hammers, and louder the noise of anvils, as I sought my way through the close and narrow streets of Birmingham, seeking the dwelling-place of Mr. Chaser. Busy were the looks of mortals, and business-like their gait. Men with brawny arms, plated with thick coats of dirt, met me at every turn, whilst higher mortals, full of bustle and assurance, jostled along with a perking pride of industry staring on their brow, that carried shame and terror to every idler on whom it chanced to fall. Idlers, in truth, there were very few. Indolence and pleasure were expelled from the streets, which were taken up entirely by an intense and concentrated assiduity, real in many instances, but assumed in not a few. As I walked through the close streets of Birmingham for the first time, I could have imagined—and without taxing my imagination largely—that I was once more trudging along the familiar ways of my own beloved *City* —dear in spite of—perhaps, BECAUSE of all that I had suffered in it—of all that I had lost and left there; but an accurate observer could not fail to be impressed with the conviction that the imitation was defective, the assimilation incomplete. London, mighty London, gigantic, incomparable, and unapproachable, scarce noticeable was Birmingham's thin and thready current contrasted with the overwhelming flood that I have seen pressing along thy narrow, deeply-fretted channels! Inferior was the place in all respects. The very handicraftsmen were a less clean and neat, a paler and a sadder race, than that I had left behind me. Mr. Chaser, my mother's cousin, was the owner of a foundry, situated in a smoke-dried lane. Attached to the works was a small house, in which resided the proprietor and his family. I reached the door, surveyed it for a moment, and sighed with apprehension. I touched the bell, and my heart palpitated when I heard it tingling through the house. The bell was not answered. For a quarter of an hour I stood expectant, lacking the courage to ring again. At last I ventured. At the close of another quarter of an hour, and after a third appeal, the door was opened. A young man, pale and sickly-looking, stood before me: he was in his shirt sleeves. His hands and arms were smeared with patches of dirt, and his face, from which perspiration was falling thickly, matched them. His eyes were of a light blue colour, and deeply sunk in his head. He fixed them on the ground, from which fact you might possibly infer that he was modest and bashful, if the sinister and villanous expression of the rest of his features did not prove him at once to be as *whiteliver'd* and vicious, as he was blue-eyed and whitefaced.

"Did you ring before?" he enquired in a surly tone, and without deigning to look at me.

"I did," I answered with some *hauteur;* "and I desire to speak with your master."

"What do you mean stupid, by master?" was the elegant reply. "Here, come," he continued. "Curse the door—this is how half the work gets spoilt. He may find somebody else to be porter, or else a better man to stand at the forge. Well, come in, can't you? Who are you? What's your business?"

"Does Mr. Chaser live here?" I asked.

"Why, of course he does—you know that as well as I do—didn't you say just now you wanted to see him?—why, what the devil do you mean?"

With these words I was ushered, or rather pushed, into a room that opened into the passage, and was within a few yards of the street door. The pale-faced youth departed. Who was he? Surely not a relative of

Mr. Chaser's? His son, for instance? Oh, Heaven forbid! I had scarcely time to notice two red-coloured prints upon the wall—representations of *Industry and Idleness*—before a heavy footstep warned me to prepare for the bodily presence of Mr. Chaser himself. My pulse leaped higher and higher as the affecting moment of our interview drew near. How delighted he would be to receive me! He had never seen me before. Twenty years had elapsed since he last beheld my mother. How he would grieve to hear of her death! How bitterly would he regret the angry words which had passed between him and my father, giving rise to the family quarrel which followed so soon afterwards—severing them entirely from one another. A fat, unshaven gentleman walked in, and I retreated involuntary a pace or two. He also was without a coat. An air of unmitigated vulgarity pervaded the whole man, and I prayed internally that the fleshy bulk constituted Mr. Chaser's foreman. He spoke—the accent was provincial—"Well, young man, and what do you woant with me?"

"Mr. Chaser, sir?" I asked, too well assured already.

"Yes; you've hit it," he answered with a grin. "I are Chaser, and I are awful busy, too, so I'll thank you to make haste."

"You are connected, sir, I think, with a family of the name of Stukely," (I looked in vain in Mr. Chaser's eye for some glad token of acknowledgment,) "lately resident in London?" I continued in dismay.

"Well, and whoat of that, my man? If you have any claim on that there estate, you should see the assignees. I can't help you. I haven't seen the man for twenty years, and I doan't know nothing on his affairs. My only wonder is, he warn't in the *Gazette* a score of years ago—a sleepy-headed, obstinate, old stupid ass."

"I am his son, sir," I answered quickly—trembling with indignation. "He is in his grave—you must not speak so of him."

"Whoat!" he exclaimed, seemingly surprised, but laughing very loud, "be you the chap as went to college to be made a parson on, and to learn extravagance, as if they didn't teach it fast enough at home? Nice notions them for working people! I say," he added, tipping me what I supposed to be the true Brummagem wink, "it was hardly fair upon the creditors to be filling your pockets up there when he knew he was a-going to break. I've heard it all. We are not asleep, you see. And so the old man's dead! But he has taken care of you, I reckon?"

"I do not understand you, sir."

"Oh, doan't you?" said he, looking very cunning. "Well, then, perhaps you'll tell me whoat you have come to ask of me?"

"Nothing," I answered, determined at that moment, if I died afterwards of want, not to become indebted to Mr. Chaser for a sixpence.

"Noathing?—that's queer at any rate. Well—your mother's dead, I hear. A pretty match she made of it at last! I toald her how it would be—and so did everybody else. A good woman, too, was Mary. I loiked your mother. Many a frolic I are had with her when we were youngsters. She was a tenderhearted creature. I wonder she never wrote to me; but if she had, I dare say I shouldn't have answered her, for I hate writing, and I couldn't bear your father."

Disgusted as I had become in this short space of time with Mr. Chaser, his affectionate remembrance of my mother extracted all viciousness from the aversion with which I looked upon him. Furthermore, his mention of my dear mother's name recalled her last few lines to me—her latest wish—and I felt that I dared not withhold the letter from Mr. Chaser's hands. In many things I had crossed the nearest wishes of her heart. The only compensation that I could offer to her memory was a compliance with her strict injunction. What if a shrinking sense of vexation and

of shame irritated me, and sought to hold me back? What if, in entreating aid from such a man, I suffered pangs far more severe than any the wide and open world could inflict upon me? It was reasonable and just. The retribution had commenced. It was proper that I should suffer. I placed the letter on the table.

"And whoat do you call that there?" enquired Mr. Chaser, as I did so.

"A letter from my mother, addressed to you, sir, and written many months ago."

"And whoy, in the name of goodness, didn't you send it by the post before? That's cheap and expeditious like."

"Read it, sir," I answered.

"Noa, do you read it to me. I should loike to hear a college chap. That must be foine—cut on."

I was sick at heart; but I performed my penance faithfully, and read on. It was a long epistle; such as I expected it to be. First, it reverted, and most feelingly, to the distant days which they had passed together, nurtured and brought up under one roof—but soon it flew to its main object, that of securing for me a home when my own should have passed away. She implored her cousin to receive me, and informed him that her deathbed would be made easy by the assurance she would have in her last moments of his ready agreement with her wishes.

"Well, I are glad of that, at all events," said Chaser, when I had finished.

"Of what, sir?" I enquired.

"Of her dying easy and assured; because whatever happens now can make no difference to her. I doan't see what I can do for you. My lads have done their schooling, and I are too old to learn myself. You put up for a schoolmaster, I suppose?"

"I think, sir, I could teach the rudiments."

"Can you make a pair of breeches?"

"A pair of breeches!"

"Yes—boots, or anything that's useful? You doan't expect *me* to keep you like a gentleman at college, do you? The lads are wanting clothes. If you were a tailor, now, you might have the job."

"I am willing to work, sir," I replied, "and am ready to learn; and I come to you only in obedience to my mother's commands. If you can help me, and wish to help me, a little ridicule, and a few harsh words, shall not prevent my accepting a favour at your hands."

"I doan't know what you mean by that exactly. I suppose it's sarce. D—n it, beggars shouldn't be sarcy, any how!"

My acquaintance with Mr. Chaser would at this moment have been brought to an abrupt conclusion, if the sudden appearance of a lady had not permitted the train of angry words, that had already taken fire on my tongue, to go out without explosion. The lady was finely dressed; she presented a marked, and I thought at first a favourable, contrast to the two male beasts with whom it had been my unlucky fate to engage on this eventful morning. She was bedizened in a highly coloured gown, and a pink turban adorned a reddish head of hair. Her person was short and thin, and she had a small face with pinched-up features. Her mouth was very small indeed by nature, but art was reducing its dimensions daily. Could she live long enough, the time would arrive at length for its closing up and disappearance altogether. It will have been observed that in the language and deportment of the gentleman, there had appeared a *slight* uncouthness, an utter absence, in fact, of the polished ways and forms of life—those smiling agents, who, on the shortest notice, so courteously and so ably occupy the place of friendship—herself too sacred for undis-

tinguishable mixing in the world. This obvious fault it was the lady's anxious effort to improve. Her method was a pretty one. As I have said, she screwed and drew her mouth into the smallest and genteelest shape, and words fit only for a lady's lips struggled through it, cut and polished, and qualified for ears as royal as a queen's. What could display high breeding better than such a mouth and such speech? True it is, that in the process of refining, some words were clipped and maimed, shorn of a few proportions. But much might be forgiven where the intention was so good as Mistress Chaser's. Was it her fault that *V* and *W* would still play masquerade upon her tongue—that *V*eal was *W*eal, and *W*ashing *V*ashing? Was she to blame if some independent and unnatural *H* would at momentous periods be absent without leave; and could she be answerable if he appeared again just when absenteeism was most devoutly to be wished? How willingly would she have kept the unruly alphabet in order, had it been permitted her! What but an obedient alphabet did she need, in order to become a perfect model of good manners and elegant deportment? Mr. Chaser introduced me in his own offensive manner to the fine lady, and took his leave immediately, informing me, as he departed, that it was very plain I could be of no use to him—there was nothing I could do in the shop, and therefore he could be of no possible service to me. He thought, as I had travelled from London on purpose to see him, that I might as well stay that day to dinner; if I did so, he promised to introduce me to as fine "a set of cheaps as had ever grown out of loins, though every one had earned his living since he was ten year old, and ne'er a soul of the lot had ever been to college." He grinned and left me.

The plaited lips then opened slightly, and a few syllables escaped them. "You are, I presume, the relative of Mr. Chaser?"

"*My mother* was, ma'am," I replied, waiving all personal claim to that high honour.

"He is a noble character, is he not? The true John Bull—the Englishman. There is no *hart* about him—none at all."

"Very little, ma'am, I think," I answered, most sincerely.

"You have been introduced to Master William, have you not?"

"I have not been so fortunate."

"He told me that he had spoken to you."

"I have seen no one, ma'am, but Mr. Chaser, and the man who came to the street door."

"That man, as you design him, *was* dear Master William. He is our eldest boy—and is at the head of the '*rough*' department."

"Where then presided Mr. Chaser?" thought I, at once smiling from the very depths of my misery.

"You shall see all the boys at dinner, Mr. Stukely. As Mr. Chaser said in his queent way, they are as fine a set of children as ever you beheld."

"Have you many of them, ma'am?"

"I have *h*eight." Every one superintends one department—so that all our eyes is always on our men."

I began to think of my prospects, and to consider my next movements. I spoke mechanically to Mrs. Chaser—hardly aware of my questions, or conscious of her replies.

"Have you any daughters, ma'am?" I asked, for want of a better question.

"One, Mr. Stukely—Miss Eliza. She is now at ome for the olydays.—Do you hear that?—listen!"

"What ma'am?"

"The dear at her piano. Miss Eliza is twelve years old—she will be

quite accomplished. She has a fortune from my father of her own—quite independently of Mr. Chaser. She is a parlour boarder, sir."

"No doubt, ma'am."

"You shall see her, Mr. Stukely. She is a simple-minded creature—all life and nature. I will call her—Miss Eliza—Miss Eliza!" bawled the good lady from the bottom of the stairs.

There was a loud giggle in reply, and nothing more.

"She is such a timid creature. I must fetch her—Pardon me."

The lady curtsied and vanished from my presence with a dignity which, cut up in little, would have furnished handsomely a dozen families. For a few minutes I stood in active expectation of the threatened visitation. It did not come. By degrees I ceased to look for it, and at last I let it pass from my remembrance altogether. My mind had weightier thought to bear, and it came with fearful pressure. What was I to do?—whither flee next for help? The last, the only hope, was dissipated. The anchor to which I had fondly held, dreaming of stability and security, had slipped from my clutch, and had cast me hopelessly adrift. I felt the hot blood mounting to my cheek and brain, as I took courage to look with steadiness upon my isolated, desperate condition. The room grew too confined; it was with difficulty I breathed, and I rushed into the open air. "Never," I vowed, "should that inhuman door be closed again upon me."

But I walked afterwards for three hours through the long streets of the strange town, and again and again I found myself before the only dwelling that contained human creatures who knew me, to whom I could speak—and I was inclined to ring the bell again—to obtain admittance—ask advice—seek aid. Twenty times, pride, anger and disgust interposed to restrain my steps, and to protect me against further insult—if not from further suffering and sorrow. Weakness, inclination, the fear of starvation, of a horrid death from hunger—these were in the opposite balance, and I was content at length to submit to new mortification—to deeper self-abasement. The man had asked me to his table. Who knew what would arise from such a meeting—what sparks of generosity and tender feeling might be elicited from the social board? It was due to my poor mother to make one more attempt. This idea had not occurred to me before. I was glad to find it rising thus to check the dangerous tendencies of my evil passions—passions that ever repay indulgence by treachery and betrayal. Emboldened by the instigation of a virtuous principle, sustained by its presence, once more I visited my relatives.

PART VII.

FRIENDS AND RELATIONS.

Sir Giles Overreach.—"We worldly men, when we see friends and kinsmen
Past hope, sunk in their fortunes, lend no hand
To lift 'em up, but rather set our feet
Upon their heads, to press 'em to the bottom."
A New Way to Pay Old Debts.

It was twelve o'clock at noon when I again breathed the smoky but grateful atmosphere of my relatives' habitation. The dinner party which I had been invited to join was already assembled, and at once, and without ceremony, I was admitted to a private view of the complete and graceful

group of Chasers. It is proper for me here to state, that the obese brass-founder—Chaser, senior—was a man of wealth. He had ten thousand pounds in cash, of which a parental government kindly took the charge, thereby relieving him from much solicitude and many restless nights, and for which he held securities, the most secure that could be found; the foundry and the dwelling-house had long since become his own; that unobtrusive row of houses in the adjacent alley that bore the burden of a line of workshops, and contained a little world of petty renters, were content to call him owner; and in the main street opposite, a good-sized house or two just raised and hardly finished, were indebted to him for their existence. Nor were these all. Three miles from Birmingham, where smoke and dirt were not, but in their place a broad expanse of sky, a wholesome air, hedges, trees, and shrubberies, there was a field of rising ground, and on the hillock's centre were springing up the solid glories of a suburban palace. Here, likewise, the teeming forge of Mr. Chaser supplied the mind and muscle, the stone and brick-clay, that were engaged in rearing to its height the noble structure. Whether the opulent owner proposed to end his days here, or built his castle on speculation, and in the way of business only, I cannot say. Such particulars as I have communicated to my worthy reader, I learned from Thomas, the intelligent ostler of the Sun, at which I had slept; and the inference I drew from the good news was, that notwithstanding all the grossness and vulgarity of my man of *metal*, he enjoyed a laudable relish for those choice palatable delicacies of life which he could so well afford to purchase, and which after all are not to be despised by poor and hungry men. With this consoling, animating thought, and with an appetite roused and sharpened by long exercise, I approached his table.

I entered the long passage, and passed into the small kitchen at its extremity, and there, in various parts of it, sat, stood, reclined, and lolled, the interesting family. Dinner had commenced, and all were eating. A deal table, relying upon three legs placed at unequal distances from the centre, being small, was appropriated, as was just, to Mrs. Chaser and her spouse. Under the shadow of a door, and in a corner, seated on a stool, knife in hand, I caught the figure of the blue-eyed youth—the eldest son, and supervisor of the *rough* department. As great men carry their business-habits into the retreats of life, so did my ancient friend appear to adorn the domestic hearth with graces borrowed from his peculiar occupation. Still uncoated, and still covered with black honours conferred upon him by the smithy—still turning his pale and inauspicious countenance from your gaze, silent and unobservant he sat, reducing to their original elements a monstrous *hunch* of bread torn from the loaf, and an endless surface of fried bacon, ravished from the flitch. Reclining against the above-mentioned door, and similarly employed, was a youth by a year or two the junior of my friend. His face was, like his brother's, *white*, but, unlike his, good-humoured. The heavy monotony of beans and bacon was relieved, on the part of this young gentleman, by a lively exhibition of grotesque grimaces, performed apparently for the improvement and delight of invisible spectators in the yard aforesaid. A bench was fixed against the wall. Here sat in company a pair of juvenile Chasers; in company as respects their bodies and the swallowing of the beans, but as to conversation, friendly exchanges, and the like, as far asunder as the poles. One dish supplied the two. They ate with little modesty or reserve, each against the other—both against time. One boy, the last male Chaser, present, had a seat at the dresser with Ebenezer, the apprentice—a strange lad, of whom I shall have to speak at some length hereafter. This hopeful twig (not Ebenezer, but his messmate) diversified the moments by

mischievous attempts to rob the poor apprentice of any little comfort that he could get in such a family, and from such a meal. Now he called his attention to some curious phenomena in the room, and took the opportunity to dig a fork into his bacon, and so *bone* it. Now he acted with his feet certain evolutions beneath the table, causing the boy to writhe, to stoop, to rub his legs. Then vanished from his plate beans by spoonsful. The victim said nothing, but bore the molestation with a meekness amounting to a fault. Very sorrowful he looked, and intimate with trouble. The canker had already galled the early promises of his spring —if the promise flower can ever shoot and grow in poverty's unsunned, neglected garden. There is little more to be noticed in this exclusive dining-room. "Miss Eliza" sat upon her father's knee, over against her mother. The young lady was the latest produce, and being on that account the best beloved, was, according to a sound philosophy, neglected, spoiled, and ruined. Her hair was very red, her face freckled, and her behaviour froward and most insolent. She assisted her parent's deglutition by a constant pulling at his whiskers; and her parent submitted to the infliction without a murmur, like a wise man as he was, in the presence of one greater then he. With joy be it said, as with unbounded delight I remarked, that the overbearing Chaser himself was but a humble subject in his own house, under the despotic government of his own wife. An appropriate servant-girl professed to clean some dishes at a sink. I did not believe her. Yet charity hopeth all things, and is therefore bound to hope that even the dirtiest person, and the blackest water, and the foulest sink, may contrive, between them, to achieve a miracle. There was little ornament in the room except upon the ceiling. This was tastefully decorated with hams and sides of bacon, which were, no doubt, greatly improving in flavour under the treatment of sundry flies and blue-bottles, who passed the summer months here, and gave their best attention to the food in question.

Nobody thought fit to notice me. Before I had time to say a word, the eldest son rose from his seat and sighed. "That's done," said he, and then, without another word, departed. "Hollo there, Bill!" cried the father, calling him again, "how get you on? Do you want me, lad?"

"No," replied the son. "I've set the men on Brownlow's work. They won't be done afore to-morrow at dinner-time."

"What have you done with Gruel, Bill?"

"Gove him the sack," said Bill, "on Saturday night. I see'd how it was with him. He's going to break up all at once like Shivers did, and then we should have another wife and family hanging on again for months. I wasn't a bit too soon with Gruel, I can tell you. He's in the horspittle by now."

"Very well, Bill," said Mr. Chaser in a voice of contentment. "Anything else?"

"Yes, very well indeed, my dear," added Mrs. Chaser herself, "and very careful of your father's interest; but recollect, Master William, you have not yet said *grace*, and how often have I told you that no blessing can accompany our best actions if we neglect——"

"Oh, bother!" cried Bill, interupting her, and taking his leave at the same time.

A general laugh succeeded. All bore a part in it but the sad apprentice. When it subsided, Mr. Chaser was polite enough to turn to me.

"There, sit down, lad," said he. "Take that seat of Bill's. What has kept you all this time? I was in hopes—I was afeard, I mean, that you had gone home again. Wanted to look about you, eh? I say, Molly——"

"Oh!" shrieked the lady, trying very hard and ineffectually to blush. "Fie, Mr. Chaser, fie! Remember, we are not alone. *Mary*, my dear."

"Well, Mary, my dear, is all them beans gone? Is that there bit of bacon cold? because if it ain't, just give it to the boy, and if it are, let Susan brile another rasher."

"It's not *quite* cold," said the imaginative and economic Mrs. Chaser.

"More it ain't!" exclaimed her husband, planting the back of his fat hand upon it to be convinced. "There, enjoy yourself a bit," continued he, putting the savoury morsel into my hand. "You must be rare and hungry. Fill your belly, and then I'll hear all you've got to say."

A bright remembrance of a delicious day passed in Cambridge, spent in honourable toil, when the unknown future was arrayed in all the apparel of a gorgeous fancy—stole suddenly upon me. The feelings of that day—the soft contentment, pure satisfaction—the fond and pardonable pride—the feelings and the incidents of that day, vivid and clear, were here in Chaser's kitchen. How, why, or when they come, who shall tell me? They pierced, and penetrated, and left me quickly as they had come, with the warm blood gushing from my stricken heart.

I held my plate in silence, sitting on the stool, surveying the cold bacon, but for the moment thinking of nothing less.

"Oh, it isn't good enough, isn't it?" said Chaser, looking at me all the time. "I don't doubt you are used to better, but don't despise your wittles. What, ain't you done yet?" he exclaimed, turning upon the apprentice. "Ebenezer—this won't do, my lad. Come, missus, call upon Ebenezer for his grace."

Ebenezer's knife and mouth were in juxtaposition.

"Now, Master Ebenezer, if you please," said his mistress solemnly, "put your knife down. '*For what*,'——Go on."

Poor Ebenezer dropped his knife, and mumbled something very indistinctly about his "thankfulness;" for what, or to whom, it was impossible to gather. He also took his leave.

There is no arguing with a healthy and determined hunger. It has no moral perceptions. Offended to the quick by my cavalier and disdainful reception, incensed at the free and easy mode of Mr. Chaser, his domineering behaviour and address, I vowed internally to taste none of the food that could be offered to me with a better grace. But an internal vow! Heaven help it in a struggle with an internal *growl!* Snow before the meridian sun! a syllabub before a giant! I hated Mr. Chaser, I hated his family, I hated the meanness and depravity of human nature, my own nature, myself; but I devoured beans and bacon with avidity, and having finished them, and appeased the animal craving, I became vexed and miserable indeed. Long before I had concluded my repast, three Chasers made a simultaneous rush to the sink, where, turning on the spout which admitted water, they participated in one short and incomplete ablution. Six hands, of different size and shape and colour, were thrust under the tap, catching what liquid they might in the general *mêlée*. A second rush towards a family jack-towel, suspended on a thundering roller behind the kitchen door, and more startling than the first by reason of that roller; and a third rush, out of the room and into the open yard, completed with a fine *effect* another act of the performance. Very gratifying to my vanity, and flattering to my feelings, was the marked attention of my young and new-found relatives.

Of the male offspring there remained now in the room only the facetious performer on his own face—evidently his father's favourite. There

was an air of independence and low assurance about this youth—the result of an unlimited and fatal indulgence—that was offensive in the highest degree. His enviable privilege it seemed to banter and expose to ridicule the venerable author of his existence—favoured child! The sire's ambition and vain pride it was, to be the subject of the hopeful's sallies—sapient father! If, on my arrival in Birmingham, I had entertained a hope of becoming the book-keeper, clerk, or accountant of Mr. Chaser, and if, even whilst sitting on the stool and swallowing my dinner, that hope at intervals still stole forth, faintly and indistinctly glimmering, it was effectually extinguished during the short conversation that was now about to take place.

"Well, Tom," said Mr. Chaser, smiling.

"Well, old gentleman," replied the son, smiling also.

"Ha, ha, ha!" continued the father, struck comical by the repartee, and laughing outright.

"Ha, ha, ha! rejoined the son, imitating him, and laughing outright also.

"Don't, Tom, don't!—there's a good fellow," cried old Chaser, imploringly, and shaking all over; "take care—don't—I am *so* full!"

"Well, I won't, old gentleman; but I say, do tell what's-his-name here [a polite reference to me] that story about you, and mother, and the bandbox."

"Master Thomas—Master Thomas!" interposed Mrs. Chaser, frowning a reproof.

"Ah, that's right! Molly, stop him—do. Let my wittles settle, Tom."

"Come, go it, father," continued Tom, urging him on, and taking no notice of his mother's remonstrance. "Begin at the old place—'*When missus and I was a-courting.*'"

"Did you hear me, Master Thomas?" enquired the lady, in a louder tone.

"*She persuades me one day to walk into a hay-field,*" said Tom, proceeding in the narrative.

"How can you sit there, laughing, Mr. Chaser?" asked Mrs. Chaser, very angry indeed, "encouraging your son in this family *exposy?*"

"Oh—oh—oh!" groaned Chaser, in convulsions.

"*Now Molly's wind was none of the best,*" continued Tom.

"Miss Eliza, Miss Eliza!" exclaimed Mrs. Chaser, with feelings wounded to the quick, but still with all her dignity, "leave your parent's knee this minute. I cannot suffer you to breathe this tainted atmospear. Mr. Chaser, I am shocked at your behaviour. Miss Eliza, come." *Exeunt* Mrs. Chaser and Eliza.

"Oh!" cried Chaser, wiping down his forehead, "I are puffed for certain. We have put our foot in it now, Tom. Get along, you dog, and look to *business!*" It was a talismanic word, and sobered Mr. Chaser quickly. In a moment again the poetry of life was dissipated, and he was the brassfounder and the proprietor of the suburban mansion. "I are not going to be bamboozled by *Uphill* any longer. Have you wrote him to say so, Tom?"

Merry and jocose as was Master Tom, even in his ill-regulated mind joking was held subordinate to the important consideration of "the main chance."

"Haven't I, though?" he said, in answer to his father's question. "I wish you had seen the letter."

"What did you say to the thief?" asked the parent, working himself up to an intense hatred of the unfortunate Mr. Uphill.

"Oh, the humbug! I gave it him well," answered Tom, stirring up the caldron of unholy passions. "His bill's due on Monday; he offered fifty pounds to meet it, and the other fifty in a fortnight's time. I told him we had done that for him once afore, and wasn't going to do it again. If he couldn't pay regularly he shouldn't buy the goods, and, as he had bought 'em, he must bide the consequences. If he failed to pay the bill on Monday, the lawyer must certainly have a touch at him on Tuesday."

"Did you say, Tom, that I was out of pocket by the whole transaction?"

"Leave me alone for that. In course I did."

"It was very lucky, Tom, we got him to take that old metal off our hands when we renewed his bill. We should never have sold it else. It wasn't worth the price of carriage, and he paid for it handsomely."

"Yes, you can't grumble there, I think, old gentleman—something like a hundred per cent., I reckon."

"Did you write to him that I hadn't a sixpence of ready money in the house, and that lots of bills were coming due on Tuesday?"

"Why, to be sure I did. I wrote the usual thing, only with a little more of spice for the occasion."

"What have you done with the five hundred pounds as was remitted from America this morning?"

"It's in the desk."

"Then pay it, Tom, at once into the bank. We've got nothing to pay away this month, have we?"

"Nothing but the wages."

"What's our next job, Tom?"

"Oh, don't break your heart—I've lots to do! There's no fear of rust in this house. I ain't begun the books yet, but them's soon done. There's only two months to enter up. Why did you ask?"

"Nothing pertikler. I want a pipe, Tom."

Tom directed his steps to a cupboard, one of the innumerable conveniences with which this small kitchen was crowded. From it he drew forth a well-used clay pipe, and a home-made box of burnished brass containing the tobacco.

"I say, father," he said in a half whisper, lighting the pipe which he had previously filled, "do tell the Londoner here your wonderful story about mother and the bandbox."

"Get out, you rascal!" replied his father, threatening to throw a plate at his head. Tom caught his father's hand, caused the plate to fall to smash, and then with an extraordinary grimace performed especially for the occasion, took instantly his leave. There was no doubt of this lad's being the genius of the family, and head of the *literary* department. If matters had worn a more favourable aspect, and my reception had been of the most satisfactory nature, the only situation that I could possibly fulfil in this establishment was already occupied by a principal, the possessor of powers which I might in vain attempt to emulate or acquire. There was no home for me with Mr. Chaser; and, alas, alas! there was no home for me in the wide and populous world. I rose from my seat.

"What! are you off?" enquired Mr. Chaser, in a voice that fully expressed his wishes in the matter.

"I was thinking, sir——"

"Well, don't hurry for a minute. I'll hear all you have got to say. What is it you expect? What are you fit for? Now let's hear all about it." Mr. Chaser fixed himself cosily and comfortably in his chair, crossed his legs, puffed his pipe, and prepared himself, with a true patronising air,

for anything I had to communicate. I sat down again, and after a desperate struggle with my better self, I resolved to take my opportunity, and to engage all the energy I possessed in one last tremendous effort to move the man to succour and befriend me. I coughed, and hemmed, and took the necessary measures for a long oration—my auditor was all attention. I felt that my only chance of prevailing with my antagonist was by compelling his mind to dwell upon the memory of my lost mother—by speaking of their early intercourse—by calling up a point in his existence when his soul was fresher—his heart less fortified by the bulwarks which an educated selfishness—miscalled worldly *wisdom*—had set up against mankind. I spoke to him of her many sorrows, the untimely loss of all her offspring, her fears, anxieties, and endless watchings at my infant cradle. I spoke to him of her unbounded love, her self-denial, and her long-endurance. I told him how she had ventured her little all of earthly happiness to secure my affection, that was her right—my present and eternal good, which she lived to forward—how she had lost her venture, and how the loss of it had beggared, ruined, and destroyed her. "In obedience to her command, sir, I have come to you," were my concluding words. "In compliance with the desire that strove in her heart, when every other worldly wish was disregarded or dismissed. Disobedient in many things, I obey her last injunction. I appear before you, recommended by her dying breath, and by the memories which attach you to the departed. I am no idler. I would not depend upon your charity for my daily bread. It is in your power, no doubt, to procure me employment in this large, busy town. Your influence must be, from your position, important; I ask, entreat you, to use that power, to employ that influence, for the child of your lost friend and cousin—once beloved and cared for, according to your own acknowledgment. You shall find me but too glad to labour for my existence in any condition of life. Do not think that I have gone through the burning fires of the past without some purifying—some improvement. To toil and to sweat is the universal lot. Happy am I to be set free with no harder punishment. Put me in the way of an humble, honourable independence—it is all I ask—and I will thank and bless you."

For the first few seconds, Mr. Chaser hearkened to my recital with great respect. Then he altered his position in the chair, turned his back upon me, and listened apparently with an attention rivetted to every word. I noticed the refreshing change; I perceived that I had struck, at length, a human chord—my heart leaped at the brightening prospect, my tongue took courage, and warmed with animating sounds. Soon the pipe was forgotten, and it dropped neglected on his knee, whilst his big head fell sadly on his shoulders. What! had I reached and shaken the old man's heart of iron, and did the favourite pipe give place so readily to my poor cause? Oh! force of natural eloquence, not to be resisted by the mightiest when thou comest on the wings of passion and with the strength of Truth! I concluded my address.—The man was vanquished. He did not move a limb—a muscle—he did not breathe. Was it shame for his previous undeserved and cruel treatment of me?—was it sorrow and remorse that held him thus silent and breathless? Had I set bleeding afresh some ancient and half-cicatrized ulcer of the mind? Was conscience still so tender in this rough-hewn case? I had indeed achieved a victory, not more glorious for the conqueror than advantageous for the conquered. I had no more to say, but I stood still, ready to reap the rich reward of my success; and for some minutes Mr. Chaser kept still likewise. "Intense and profitable moments for us both," thought I. Mr. Chaser at length breathed softly.

I waited for his words—none came, but he breathed again. "What," said I, secretly, "are the pains and tortures of the body, compared with the throes and agonies of a stricken conscience! What may be his sufferings now!" Still he drew his breath, and still he sat motionless. I approached him, and held out my hand. He did not take it. I was deeply moved; I walked across the kitchen and placed myself before him. I had scarcely done it, when I was startled, terrified, by———a snore! Mr. Chaser was indeed fast asleep—and had been so, there was no doubt of it, ever since he had arranged himself in his chair, and had turned his back upon me and my resistless eloquence.

The shadow of my form crossing the closed eyes of the sleeper—awoke him. He muttered some words with a confused apprehension of the passing scene. Then he looked about him, surveyed the kitchen generally but obscurely with half-opened eyes, and called upon me "just to repeat that there last word again."

"Which word?" I asked, sick—most sick at heart.

"About your mo—ther—go to bed—wish good-bye"—and the eyes were covered gently over by the lid, and he bobbed his head, and was fast asleep again.

With a fiercer desire to suffocate the snoring brassfounder than had possessed Hamlet when his hands itched to shorten the prayers of his over-pious uncle, I dragged myself away from the temptation. Leaving immediately the hall of feasting, I directed my steps towards the manufactory. Here were life and animation truly. Workshop after workshop I passed through, meeting a hundred creatures in my progress, too busy with their hands to grant their eyes one passing glance at the intruder. In every room there was a Chaser, securing the respect and homage due to the unconscious spirit reposing in the kitchen, and which otherwise might have been suspended—so inconstant and disloyal are the masses! Few words were thrown away, and fewer moments lost. Each workman felt the uncomfortable influence of the evil eye that fell upon him—that fixed him to his work, and kept him hammering in spite of all his struggles for rest and breathing-time. The youthful Chasers were present in a twofold character. *Ostensibly* they presided over the different departments of the factory, to labour with the men as labourers. *Really* they were so many spies, noting the various proceedings, compelling silence, enforcing constancy, marking down defalcations. How accurately they performed this division of their task, the workmen themselves acknowledged with wonder and dismay as Saturday night arrived, and with it the acceptable settling time. If, during the short interval of social relaxation, my young friends had found nothing to say to me, I could hardly expect them to be very communicative during the severer hours of business. They permitted me to pursue my road without the smallest greeting or acknowledgment of my presence. One room contained a regiment of young girls who were engaged in the higher branches of the service. Their office it was to finish and furnish the last touches to the work, which had become brighter and cleaner as it gradually descended from the rough hands of dirty Master William. Over this youthful *corps* Mrs. Chaser herself sat in authority. An awful silence prevailed. The little burnishers and lacquerers held their breath, and the mistress had enough to do to watch that none escaped them. As I proceeded, the lady bowed her head with much solemnity. Another room completed the survey. It was the counting-house—a small square chamber, filled with drawings and designs carved in wax or cast in plaster. Here was a desk and one high stool.

THE ATTENTIVE LISTENER.

Here sat smoking a pipe, in humble imitation of his parent, the facetious Tom. A jug of small-beer was before him; the ashes of his tobacco were strewed upon the open books. He was the only lazy man in the establishment—true, he was the only genius. A smile was on the countenance of Master Tom. This was no compliment to me; his face was never serious. The counting-house conducted to the street. I snuffed the fresh invigorating air blowing through the open door. How glad was I to feel again the generous element about me! I was *not* so thoroughly deserted as I deemed. I had my health, my liberty, and oh, above all, I was sensible and alive to the beneficent operations of a bounteous and all-healing nature. I heard the buzz of human voices. Hope whispered delusively in my ears, and promised more than I could ask. I listened eagerly to her promptings, and rose superior to my fate, and to the scorn these men had thrown upon me. I departed. "Good-night!" exclaimed the clerk, deridingly. I turned upon him, but he met my enquiring gaze with a grimace that set me laughing, and I could not be angry. I encountered Mr. Chaser as I passed up the alley. He beckoned me into his house, but it was only to dismiss me from it more formally and decidedly. He did not hesitate or blush to acquaint me that he had considered the matter over very seriously, and had come to the conclusion that he could not help me—that was one word for all. As for being security or recommending me, why he knew nothing of me, except that I had been to college, and broke my mother's heart, which were two things against me, and therefore he couldn't be responsible, and so *that* point was settled. If my father had sent me to him when I was young, and if many other circumstances, too tedious here to mention, had taken place, why then something very satisfactory would have been the consequence, and he would have performed wonders in my behalf; but as he had not sent me when I was young, and as the particular circumstances had *not* come to pass, why of course it was impossible to relieve my urgent wants—to put a crust of bread into my starving throat. This was all very natural, reasonable, and easy to be understood. "Take my advice," said Mr. Chaser, kindly and in conclusion, proffering his counsel, "go back to London. You are sure to get into something *there;* but here there's a dreadful feeling against you college chaps. We don't want gentlemen in Birmingham. We can't afford 'em. Go back again, and get your living where you are known. If you stop here any time, missus told me just to say, that she hoped you wouldn't come hanging about the factory. Laziness is horrid catching, and you'd only be ruining the boys, and do yourself no good, for we shouldn't give you the least encouragement. Do you understand?"

"Oh, perfectly!"

"Well, then, I've nothing more to say, except——"

"Now, father, don't be all day," exclaimed a voice from a workshop window, distinguishable as Master William's.

"Coming, lad, coming! There, go about your business," he added, with impatience. "You are upsetting the whole house. Get on, get on!" and so saying, he moved towards the door, urging me at the same time most unceremoniously before him; in short, and without concealing the fact—kicking me clean out.

Bewildered, distressed, humiliated, and scarcely knowing what I did, I involuntarily pursued my way out of the hateful town. I passed into the suburbs, intending to walk until my rising passion should be dissipated, when, if my reason were yet left me, I would take myself once more home. "*Home! home!*" I repeated the word till I shrieked, frantically

laughing. Home for me?—With whom? With the good fellow, upon whose bounty I had already lived until the food which I meanly gathered at his board stuck in my throat, refusing to be swallowed, held there by shame and self-abhorrence? Was it to him that I could now return? No—welcome starvation rather; and, if it must come, death on the highway. Should I persevere, assert my natural rights, and put again to trial the soft and sympathetic heart of Mr. Chaser? Yes, to be again thrown into the street with vulgar insolence and brutality! Truly that were worth the attempt. Irritated to a degree that admitted not of subjugation or control, I increased my pace, trembling from head to foot with anger and excitement, and repeating my grievances aloud as to a multitude. Schemes that might never be reduced to practice, were invented by my hot imagination—the only faculty of my mind that could exert itself; and this let loose, became delirious with its freedom—and one after another was disposed of as impracticable, wild, and useless. Still I walked forward, and, with my back upon the city, experienced at least a sense of freedom. For three hours I did not slacken my pace. Reaching, however, a roadside public-house, almost dropping from fatigue, I craved permission to rest my limbs. It was granted me, and the eye of the landlady followed me with suspicion into the tap-room. There I sat, wondering what I should do next. Everything I possessed was on my back. I had no ties like other men to bind me to a particular spot of ground: I acknowledged no preference for any—the loveliest of nature's heaven-begotten scenes of earth. Generous fields, ripe with the sustenance of life, wherever they might be, in whatever quarter of the globe, were now for me to seek, and, if I found them, there would I recognize my father-land. "And I will wander," I continued, "until I reach them. I cannot be deserted entirely by my God. I shall find a haven yet. Punishment I deserve—I have received; but He is not a God that persecutes unto the end, and who delights in vengeance. I will not falter. Yet have I not read," I asked despondingly, "of poor and famished men, brought to the pass in which I find myself, carrying their inefficient prayers to man, screaming for bread, receiving in its stead a stone; then lingering on and sinking, till the friendly hedge receives them, where they die, less pitied and regarded than men's dogs? It is a horrid death. Heaven, let it not be mine!" I wept bitterly, for tears were as companions, soothing my griefs. The pain was less acute, assuaged and softened by the water drops. I thanked the landlady, and set out again. I did not proceed a hundred yards before a fresh suggestion darted across my brain. I would go at once to London. "If help is to be got," I said determinedly, as if I needed energy and emphasis to persuade myself, "London is the likeliest place to meet with it; and if I die, where is the fitting place for me to lie but near the pauper grave of my poor father? Oh, father!" I cried out, bursting again into wild emotion, "could you have foreseen this dreadful hour—could you have witnessed this completion of your darling plans—what would have been your grief! Heaven was gracious when it carried you to peace—and to oblivion of the world. And my dear mother, where is she with her thousand anxieties—her indefatigable cares—her fears—her mother's love? What would at this moment be the expression of that watchful eye, that in her dear one marked so carefully the earliest shadows of some approaching ailment? How terrible would be the violent motion of that heart, that shook and trembled at the boy's shrill cry of joyousness!" These were sickening, maddening thoughts; and, like a madman, I ran along the road, seeking to fling off and to escape the in-

tolerable load. Night came on, bringing with it a louring sky. Black clouds gathered overhead, and tracked my way. At length, they burst, and rain poured down in torrents. Wet to the skin, and shuddering with cold, I continued my journey. I was no longer violent—I did not weep. I felt that I had reached the height of my calamities; and once upon the summit of bleak misery, as on the naked mountain tops, there is rest, silence, intensity, and breathlessness. My road brought me to a farm-house. It was a rural palace. A fire was burning in a large sitting-room, and its cheerful blaze made visible a dozen happy creatures who formed a circle round the family hearth. A halo of rich light surrounded them. Beyond them, in the room, all was darkness. It was the delicious hour of unutterable felicity—who cannot call it to remembrance?—when the good fire, made sacred by our affections, pours forth a stilly joy that winds into the soul, rendering other light an irksome glare and a profane intrusion. Sweet notes of music caught my ear as I passed the door—some home melody, with power to represent the unruffled peace that dwelt within. I hurried on. The night was growing darker—the storm more violent; the wind howled fearfully, and the rain fell as though the flood-gates of heaven were opened, for a second time, upon a doomed world. A new impulse moved me. I would return to the farm-house, and crave permission to sleep there—in some barn or outhouse, in any hole where a friendly roof would cover me from the pitiless fury of the elements. No sooner thought than done. I knocked at the door, and begged to see the owner of the house. He appeared; a portly man, with a rubicund face that seemed aware of the soul's integrity, and made it apparent in every look and feature. It was a face that I could trust, and I asked for shelter, convinced that my petition was already complied with. The farmer heard me, and took no time for thought. "Ay, ay, lad," said he; "it won't do to turn a Christian into the storm, just after bringing the beasts comfortably out of it. What an awful night it is! I should be sorry to have my dog in it. Here, Willy," he cried out, "take this youngster to the old blue room; make him a fire, and give him supper—and—do you hear?—dry his clothes for him, or we shall be hanged for murder. There—follow the boy," he continued, addressing me, "and get those things from your back as soon as you can."

"It must have been an angel," said I to myself, as I sat before a crackling fire, enjoying a wholesome meal, and clad in a shepherd's dress, with which the good farmer had supplied me, whilst my own was growing dry; "it must have been my guardian angel that whispered in my ear, and gave me courage to turn back. I should have trudged on in spite of everything, and died perhaps before morning. I shall never forget this kind-hearted creature. Oh, that I could acquire influence and wealth only to display my gratitude to the few whose ready hands have drawn me from perdition!" Whilst I was thus dreaming, the farmer himself stepped into the room. I rose.

"Never mind, my lad," said he, motioning me to be seated, eat away, eat away. You are very welcome. I have only come to see how you are. They'll make a bed for you directly. The men breakfast in the morning at six o'clock, and you are quite at liberty to join them. Make yourself comfortable. They are as much at your service as if they were your own. All I have to ask you is, that, for the sake of those that come after you, you won't run away with a blanket or any other paltry thing in the room, as the man did that I gave a bed and supper to last year. My missus has just reminded me of it, or else I had forgotten all about it. It isn't worth

your while; for, in the first place, stolen things never do a man good; and secondly, it isn't the thing, and, as I said before, isn't fair to those who are as badly off and more deserving than yourself. I don't mean you," he added, perceiving me changing colour. "I mean such rascals as the fellow I speak of." I assured my benefactor that he had nothing to fear from me, and that misfortune had not yet made me indifferent to honesty.

"I believe you," he answered,—"I could tell it by your looks; but my good lady has seen so much of the world, and has been so deceived, that I don't wonder she is suspicious a little, and looks about her. Don't mind what I have said—finish your supper, and get a good night's rest, and thank God we have been able to afford you both."

The farmer departed, and if he did not sleep soundly, it could not be that he had not earned repose, or that self-reproach disordered and discomforted his pillow.

Existence is a history of contrasts and dissimilitudes. Without us and within, sunshine and cloudiness vary with the hour. Sorrow is set off against delight; enjoyment is heightened by misfortune. Our cup of life has mixed ingredients, and the draught is oxymel. Strengthened with a hearty breakfast, and cheered by the return of smiling weather, I resumed my travels, gladdened and encouraged. I did not remit exertion, nor lose confidence, for many hours. Arriving at length at the outskirts of a large city, I halted, and directed my eyes in search of a temporary resting-place. Before an ancient-looking inn, the only house in view, and at a low table, five or six men were seated; by turns talking, laughing, smoking, drinking, but principally occupied in discussing the merits of an old newspaper. Bold with my success at the farm-house, I resolved to apply to this company for succour. Their looks were, upon the whole, good-humoured, and time and place were promising. I had hardly yet acquired the beggar's needful strength of heart, and I advanced towards them with a meek and hesitating step. Drawing near, I overheard one—the loudest and most disputatious of the party—arguing with vehemence a contested point in the debate. Catching sight of me, he did not pause, but pointed to me with his finger, and fixed upon me the general attention. "Now, there's a fellow," he continued, as if pursuing his discourse —"he's another of them; till you rid the country of such locusts, you'll do no good at all. We are eaten up by vagrants. To jail with them, say I, or transport 'em, sir, at once. I have got a way of treating them." I checked immediately my further progress—and went quickly forward on my journey.

I cannot torture myself by a minute recital of the wretchedness which accompanied me during the five following days. I cannot, even in my age, look back upon that horrid scene, and not be affected with something of the pain I felt in passing through it. One day I lived upon a portion of bread given to me by a charitable baker; and on the same night I slept in an unguarded stable, whither I had crept at nightfall, unperceived by any one. A second day I begged alms upon the road, and submitted, for a few pence, to the most cruel and degrading insult, and reproaches too! Ah, every one was liberal of these; these were to be obtained unasked; reproaches for being an idler and a beggar—for not labouring, as I should, for my support! One gentleman I found most bountiful in this respect, and prodigal of invectives. He was the master of a fine white house and ornamental garden. In the latter he was promenading with much stateliness when I ventured to solicit his assistance. He started back in great affright, and looked upon me with a killing frown. High iron gates pro-

tected him from violence or assault, and, conscious of his advantage, he was bold to overbear and bluster. "Why doesn't the able-bodied rascal get to work, and not annoy the public in their houses? It would be more becoming, fellow."

"It would indeed, sir," I replied, "and much more grateful to the miserable wretch before you. Perhaps you'll give me work, sir?"

"What does the blackguard mean?"

"Or kindly tell me where I may obtain it?"

"John!" cried the gentleman to his servant-man—"here—go fetch the constable. This man will murder me. Look how the monster grins. A pretty thing to insult a householder on his premises. We've stocks, thank God, for beggars!"—And with this denouncement he strutted off.

Two nights I spent in the open air, gathering what sleep and rest I might at the foot of a large tree. The fourth night, suffering from extreme cold, benumbed and aching in every joint, I crawled to a brick-kiln, hazarding my life—too worthless to be taken—for a little healing warmth.

I reached at last my destination—reached it, broken down, crushed in body and in mind. I had become thin and wan from prolonged anxiety. A fever was upon me, and my feet were sore and swollen. The first feeling that I experienced on entering the metropolis, was one of vexation and vain regret that I had come so far, at such a cost, without a single object to allure me. "Fool that I am!" I exclaimed, "why did I not wait patiently in Birmingham? Something might have turned up there. I am certain of my fate in London." So tossed and beaten was my unsettled and afflicted mind! How had it held its seat so long?

It was on a Sabbath-day that I found myself again in the great city. I was master of a few pence, which I had received early in the morning, passing through the village of Highgate.

Parched with burning thirst, and having no appetite for solid food, I made my way to a public-house, where I purchased and drank off a draught of ale. There, sitting to rest my tired and harassed body, I took up mechanically the newspaper of the day. It was a print that ministered to the morbid cravings of distempered minds, filled with the weaknesses and vices of mankind, dressing depravity and corruption in gaudy robes, to spare the eye from dwelling on their loathsomeness. It was the poor man's intellectual food. Fit reading for the child of immortality, with his one short day of preparation, dragged from the mercenary hold of worldly traffic! How full of consolation to the bruised spirit toiling for the crust, his eye for ever on the earth—his first and last, his only home and hope! How ennobling to the human understanding!—how worthy its transcendent scope and grasp! Here was a column of recorded offences, softened down to look harmless and attractive—here one of indecent jesting—here coarse disloyalty—here witty blasphemy—and here a string of cruel and cold-blooded sophisms—the devil's rhetoric, goading the needy, the helpless, and the ignorant, to discontent, rebellion, and destruction. But there was another column yet. In it, the broken-hearted, the world-weary, and the desperate, might find the sure and easy way of vanquishing their care. Here they might see hardihood, alienated from true valour, rushing upon its fate, and courting death with most unnatural zeal. It was the *suicide's* own column. I read with avidity the accounts, gathered from every province in the kingdom, of those gallant men who, ground by circumstance, escaped her tyranny; with their own hands severing the bonds that held them. I was transported with the more romantic and highly finished pictures imported from foreign lands, where

the prurient mind and pen are unrestrained in warm delineation. From these, I knew the faith and constancy of lovers, who, divided in life by cruel destiny, pressed to each other's breast, leaped united into darkness and the grave; the gambler's recklessness—he who, trying to overreach, was himself deceived, and, losing all, staked at last his soul's best hopes for temporary forgetfulness and peace. It was a dangerous study in my present season of trial and desertion, and I continued it until a resolution to live no longer, and to perish by my own impious act, informed me that I had nothing more to learn. Death appeared here not a grim spectre, as I had been accustomed to regard him, but as a good angel, coming with healing on his wings to conduct the weary and the worn to blissful and eternal quiet; and ah! did not I long for repose, and release from suffering, as the hart panteth after the water brooks! I put the journal aside, and departed from the public-house nerved for the fearful deed. "What," I asked myself, "what, what have I to live for? The love of life, deemed paramount in the heart of man, is extinct in mine. My affections are with the dead—and I will join the dead in death." I walked to the river-side, and coolly and deliberately marked on a bridge the spot from which I would cast myself into the water that very night. "No one," thought I, "shall witness the fact—no officious hand shall drag me back to misery, and, when I rise again, no creature will recognise me, and none will be able to aver that I did the deed myself. Thank Heaven, then, I have but one more day to live!" My fever increased, and thirst became again insufferable. My skin was dry and hot, and my body now burned with heat, and now was chilled with cold. My mind was preternaturally calm. I drank more ale, and then I visited the two churchyards where lay in enviable sleep the authors of my life—that miserable life, whose flame was burning rapidly to the socket. "Ah, me!" said I, contemplating the humble sod over my poor father, after having spent a long hour at my mother's graceful monument. "What a difference even in graves!" Who questions the universal power of wealth? Who says it may not purchase immunity from sickness, and the ills that flesh is heir to? True, it cannot. But if in this brief sojourning it takes from them the poignant stings that indigence inflicts—and removes some portion of the bitter from the cup that all must drink, its claim to honour and regard is not to be contemned. Well do I remember the gratefulness with which my father spoke of his partner's funeral—how he thanked God that he had been able to bury her with decency and respect, and to place over her dear head the sculptured structure and the engraved memorial! "He could not have lived," he said, "to see her loved remains dishonoured." What had been his own fate? Had I not lived to witness the violation of his sacred corpse? Had I not seen it, in its thin deal case, mingling in a row with a dozen pauper coffins, over whose tenants the one divine service, hastily performed, was all too long and tedious for the ill-paid minister of God? Had I not seen coffin after coffin carried to the remote and well-defined portion of the ground, distant from putrescent respectability and the aristocracy of worm's food? Had I not seen, too—oh! dreadful spectacle—shell piled upon shell, plashing in the watery earth—the topmost not reaching to the water's thick and mudded surface? Yes, I had seen all this, and more, and gazing once again upon the grave, the melancholy scene was re-enacted, and my own dark purpose was confirmed.

It was six o'clock in the evening when I entered the street in which I had dwelt from my birth, until I left it to reside in Cambridge. A foolish desire to look upon the old house, and to take leave of it for ever, pos-

sessed me, and had compelled me to retrace my steps, after having arrived for the second time at the river's bank. A superstitious feeling, inherited from my mother, prevailed over the reason that was left me; the visit presented itself to my mind in the form of a duty, and—strange incongruity!—I was afraid to destroy myself until I had religiously accomplished it. The church bells were tolling—calling the multitudes who thronged the streets to prayer, and notifying to me the hour of my departure. I continued still hot from fever, but my mind was wonderfully composed. There was no tumult there—no disorder—no irregular mixing of ideas. I was aware of everything that took place. I could reason—and, listening to a discourse, I felt myself able to reply to it steadily and fully. If I crossed the road, and passengers encountered me, I stopped suddenly still, bowed, and permitted them to pass on. "Surely," said I, "a madman could not do that. He would not be alive to these refinements of behaviour." I intercepted a gentleman on his road, and requested him, with many polite expressions, to direct me to a neighbouring street. He did so. I answered him again. We parted. It was another instance of my sanity. I endeavoured to recall to memory the events of the last few years. They rose without an effort—one after another—in regular succession. Who should say that my intellect was not as bright as sunshine?

I passed a dissenters' chapel. Many persons, men and women, were hurrying into it. It was a large square building—looking like a theatre, and the folks were crowding about the place like playgoers. A small knot of young men prevented my moving forward. One of them spoke. "Come, old fellow," said he to his companion, "let us go in—only for the fun of the thing." He entered the chapel, and the rest followed. I, scarcely knowing what I did, went immediately after them.

PART VIII.

THE TRANSITION.

It was a congregation vast of men,
Of unappendaged and unvarnish'd men,
Of plain unceremonious human beings.
Pollok's Course of Time.

THERE was a pouring in of people, and the large chapel was soon filled in every part. The place was singularly constructed. Its form was square, as already notified: its altitude was very great, and the staring, naked walls of white deceived the eye, and rendered the height still greater and more striking. Against one only of the four sides was fixed a gallery—this was opposite to the pulpit; it descended far into the body of the building, and might contain, perhaps, five hundred persons. The desk was placed in the centre of the chapel, at an unpleasing elevation—disagreeable at least to my disordered senses. An aching at the extremities of the body, such as the giddy-headed have experienced looking down

from mighty cliffs into the sea, I felt acutely, turning my eye upwards upon the preacher, separated as he was from every other person, and toppling as he seemed with every movement of his body. I took a seat, and marvelled at the individual and collective hurrying of mankind. There was a slamming of doors, a rushing to seats, an absence of devout motion and reverential quiet—all of which I had been taught to regard as opposed to the design and purpose of true religious worship. I had been accustomed to remark in houses consecrated to the Almighty's service, a grave adorning, a modest embellishment, sufficient to dignify without profaning the sacred institutions. Here there was an ostentatious, fierce display of nakedness and discomfort. The very seats were of the coarsest wood, innocent of paint, scarce acquainted with the plane. Instead of the enclosed, well-cushioned pew, with decent lining and convenient hassock, and its neat array of bibles, prayer-books, psalters, here were pens and boxes, many, it is true, shut in and appropriated to the owners, but the greater number exposed as coops for animals. These, in their narrow confines, never huddled closer than did the multitudes, who sought with eagerness and obtained scant standing-room in the enclosures. Habituated to deem most decorous and godly the solemn and universal bending of the knee, nothing could appear more strange than the heterogeneous and independent acts adopted here by individuals. In one place, a group of six, wrapt in meditation, standing up, directed their looks towards the preacher. Next to them, another cluster, meditating likewise, rudely turned their backs; some were bending to the left, some to the right; some stood bolt upright, some curved their bodies. A few looked to the gallery or the ceiling: their antipodes cast their eyes upon the ground. The whole were praying, or appeared to pray: not one was on his knees. Such were a few of the marked peculiarities that I could not fail to notice, during the two hours that flew away whilst I participated in the excitement of the congregation. The members were chiefly of an humble class; they were unfashionably attired, but their looks were marked with bold and most expressive character. The chapel was inconveniently thronged long before the arrival of the preacher; and when he at length appeared, the crowded floor, the lighted lamps of oil, the unwholesome and commingled odours, were enough to suffocate and kill him. He ascended the pulpit, and then, as if magically, the din of voices, the unsettled fluctuations of the thousand bodies, the whispers, coughs, and ceaseless humming, were chained and silenced. A breathless quiet instantly prevailed. I turned my restless eye at once upon the minister. He was a tall and graceful man; his cheeks were ashy pale, and his small and deep-blue eye potent even to witchery. No wonder that the multitudinous human sea was lulled to deathlike breathlessness under its bright influence. And what a voice! sweet as heavenly music, and powerful as melodious. He looked around him, and he uttered a few words ushering in the short prelusive hymn. As one heart, the countless congregation was touched; and as one man, it rose to proclaim and peal aloud the glorious song of praise and adoration. What stirring sounds! piercing far into the depths of my desponding spirit, and eliciting tumultuous joy in the darkest caverns of despair. Chords of sensation—new, strange, and undefinable—were clanging in my soul; and a thrill, now hot, now cold—a wild intoxication—a glad delirium—possessed me, and constrained me even to tears. I rose with the crowd, and held the rail before me for support—a needful effort! How calm and passionless was the preacher, with the heated sounds of enthusiastic piety burning at his ears! How meek, subdued,

and holy was his countenance! What a contrast it presented to the illuminated and excited looks of that united band of choristers, I could not choose but fix my gaze upon him, coveting his undisturbed and gentle bearing. Happiest of men, I judged him. The loud and solemn strain was finished. With the last lingering accents the minister arose, and immediately you might imagine that an angel floated through the building, so perfect was again the stillness. And then he prayed, offering on high, with earnestness and fervour, sweet incense for that holy place; and truly *the children there brought a willing offering to the Lord, every man and woman whose heart made them willing to bring.* Groans of self-conviction, loud affirmative responses, accompanied the speaker throughout his heartfelt supplication. Did he implore his heavenly Father to suspend the fire that every moment threatened to consume his children's obstinate accumulated guilt—then did the loud "*Amen*" pass like a watchword through the suppliant troop, borne from stricken soul to stricken soul on sighs of heaviest misery. Did he change the theme, revert to the munificence and mercy of his Maker, and give glowing expression to the teeming sense of gratitude—how quickly did the combined, reverberant, and passionate "*Hallelujah*" crown the minister's thanksgiving! Oh, whither had I come? What phantasm flickered before my poor bewildered brain, amusing it with shadows, and detaining me from death, the grave, and longed-for, lasting peace? My mind tottered. God help me!—in an instant I was unconscious of my whereabouts—ignorant of my state—self-oblivious. My head burned, my throat was hot, my tongue parched. I stared wildly about me, and with my mad looks challenged the devout worshippers on either side. Suddenly an irresistible impulse to laugh aloud seized and tormented me. My judgment—the lunatic's entangled judgment—suggested the impropriety of self-indulgence, and then raged the hot conflict between eager irrepressible desire, and notions of high decorum; notions not the less inflexible because tinged with the delusive hues of a temporary insanity. Almost choked with the mad strife, I resumed my seat, with my handkerchief thrust into my mouth to check and smother the unseemly cachinnation. Then a glimpse of reason, like passing sunshine, stole across the clouded intellect, making manifest to consciousness my miserable state, and plunging me deeper and deeper into the abyss of wretchedness. My cheek blazed with shame, and now thoroughly convinced that I was no longer master of myself—that I was really given up to the demon who held men's minds in thrall—I buried my face in my hands, and would have given worlds to escape the searching gaze of eyes which my strange conduct had invited. "Oh, I am mad! I am mad!" I repeated to myself. "I can never look up again—I can never meet their looks—what will become of me?" There was a rustling in the chapel. I heard it, but I dared not glance around me. The minister had ceased. The prayer was at an end. Silence prevailed again; and again it was broken by notes louder than ever, gushing from the overflowing hearts of faithful worshippers. I permitted the shrill tones to pass into my ears, and to stir my soul to elevated thoughts; but jealously I kept my eye in darkness, as though the lightning waited only for the first half-venturing look to strike the orb with blindness. Cold perspiration poured from my forehead, and my fevered hands were moistened. The storm of voices subsided, and once more, silence most intense. "It is the stillness of the spring morn," thought I, dallying with fancy in my gloom, "when the commotion of elements gives place to calm unspeakable. What next? Oh, celestial accents! That voice is gliding over the turbulent spirit, stilling the waters. Good thought, good thought!" I whispered to myself,

"worthy to be written down. Christ stilled the waters, so likewise his ambassador—bright idea!" He pronounced his text. "*This my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.*" He spoke of the Father, the parent of that son, and warned his listeners of the debt of love his children owed him. "Brethren," said he, his voice growing tremulous with compassionate entreating—"Brethren, we must love our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. It is the great commandment. Yea, love him with all the ability, with all the faculties, with all the intensity, and with all the illimitedness of the living soul within us. Our love must be as pure, as boundless, and as lofty, as the heavenly spirit breathed into us by God at the beginning, and partaking of his own bright essence. All love less extensive than that of your own soul, born for immortality—less thrilling than that of your entire heart, which throbs and responds with natural emotions, and is, as it were, the very throne and sanctuary of human attachments—less exalted than your own mind, that sublime principle that thinks and acts, reasons and directs—all love less extensive, less thrilling, and less dignified than all these combined, is unworthy of God, and criminal in man. I tell you of the commandment—and oh! is it come to this, that we must be *commanded* to LOVE the God who created us; who endowed us with powers only inferior to his own; who called into existence, for our use, the lovely and ever-fruitful earth; who arched the blue canopy above us, and gave the sun to warm, the moon to lighten our abode; who has provided for us enjoyment here, and bliss incomparable hereafter? If we were not lost, lost beyond the reach of any redemption—*of any, save* ONE—would not the overflowing mercies of God lead naturally to a longing, a panting, an ever-thirsting desire of love—love that would be satisfied with nothing short of its full expression—love that would admit of no comparison—love that would be equalled only by that transcendent and surpassing love that streams from God to man?"

"Ah!" I exclaimed, pressing my closed eyes with force against my palms, "rave on, and bring if you can the warmth once more into the fleshy heart. Mine is of stone!" A murmur, significant of sorrowing acquiescence, passed through the assembly as the speaker paused. My heart knocked palpably against my ribs, tossed with excitement within me and without. A short interval of quiet, and the minister continued his address. He applied himself strictly to the illustration of his subject, dwelling with fearful emphasis upon the guilty progress of the prodigal—tracking him from the first light footfall of indiscretion, until he met with him at last deep-buried in depravity and corruption. "Fathers!" he exclaimed in a melting tone of pity—"earthly fathers, are you not here this night bewailing the cruel lot of such a one? Does the history disclose no picture engraven on your souls, which the thin and filmy veil of time scarce covers? The earliest prattle of the fair young innocent rings sweetly in your aged ear; but whither are gone the fond, fond hopes you reared, as the dear creeper clung about your knees? Have you forgotten yet the hour of leave-taking? You have not—you who remember well the big, cold shadow that crawled along your spirit—darkening it with fear and dread, more miserable to bear than heaviest present sorrow. You saw the new-fledged bird fluttering and fleeing from its nest—and, losing sight of it at last, you stood silently weeping. You gave the boy your blessing—and a limb was torn from you when you looked around, and found yourself alone. How little did you dream of disloyalty and betrayal! Who would believe that the strengthened love of years should be forgotten and disregarded in an hour—that the counsel of the firmest and the dearest friend, his requests

and supplications, should be cast away, and whirled like chaff before the wind? But the time is short, and the son has reached a far country—his substance is wasted—he riots—he is a curse and not a blessing to the mother that bare him." No accompanying sounds issued from the congregation. The minister for a second forbore, and then a deep, half-smothered groan, forced its passage from ONE poor wretch's stricken bosom. "The flesh will quiver where the pincers tear." From head to foot I shuddered. "Now, now, to rush away, and drown in the deep waters the grim spectres that oppress my heated brain!" Alas, I could not move! A spell practised upon me, and shame, a threefold shame, heightening with every passing minute, fixed me like marble to the spot. "Poor prodigal!" continued the preacher, "his own most bitter enemy, breaking the parent's heart, but parting for dross with his own immortal soul, spending and wasting in wantonness and harlotry, till the bitter famine comes, and he must sink in dismal want! Behold him feeding the swine of the stranger —yearning for the husks they eat, whilst no man living will give to him. Oh, pity him—pity the prodigal in his misery!" The hot scalding tears rolled down my cheeks. I closed my ears with my hands, but the words had already reached my heart, and it bled and bled on. "Then cometh surely and speedily the terrible hour of retrospection, bringing with it pangs and groans and pitiable regrets—to many, impotent and vain as the idle summer air. Sinking with famine, starving for a crust, he remembers how many good and humble in the world have bread enough and to spare, whilst he perishes with hunger. And shall he perish? Yea, now and eternally, with no accuser, no judge, more vindictive and cruel than his own guilty conscience." The roof of my mouth was dry and clammy. I tried to moisten it with my hot tongue, and to think of the water-side, and the forgetfulness and quiet that awaited me there; but the vision would not come, and the minister's words were a flaming sword before my eyes. "I have spoken to you of the impenitent, the hardened, and the lost. But the mercy of God is boundless as his kingdom, and all are not left to the mercy of a seared and sinful conscience. Grace abounds—and shall snatch some even from the jaws of the fatal gulf. Hark! What moving tones are those which fall upon your ear? Whose remorseful tears make soft the earth's hard pillow, and melt the contumacious heart? It is the prodigal—and it is the clank of fetters that you hear falling from his soul, and setting it at liberty. He will arise and go to his father, and will say, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' Oh, happy son!—infinitely happy father!—moved to compassion—with the fount of natural affection flowing unrestrained—receive him with thy open arms, take him to thy bosom, and consecrate *repentance* with thy kisses. *Thy son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found—eat and be merry.* Are there none here this night carrying in their guilty breasts a load of sin that will not bear the light? What machinations, what secret plots, what offences against thyself, thy neighbour, and thy God, are rankling even as I speak? How long shall impenitence prevail—when will you seek forgiveness from the Father? Awake, thou that sleepest—awake, ere the last sleep of all o'ertakes thee, from which it were bliss unspeakable, and better, never to arouse again than rise unsanctified. Look there!—Behold the usurer depositing his treasure at the golden shrine—prodigal of the love he owes to God, and showering it into the lap of Mammon; and there again—the adulterer and the drunkard, with no loftier aim than the gratification of the animal craving—no higher love than the love of their own ignoble dust—meanest

—most selfish—least generous of prodigals! And oh, look here—follow me with your eyes, and mark yon trembling wretch—sure of pardon, and yet too cowardly to ask it—loving death rather than life—sin rather than virtue—Satan in preference to God. Shall I read his thoughts? Come forth, thou that shunnest the day, and courtest the dark night for thy foul purposes! Weak and helpless man, stand forth! Dost thou love darkness and the grave so well that thou wilt barter heaven for them, and with one timorous act renounce for ever thy inheritance? I tell you, though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red as crimson they shall be as wool. There is no guilt that mercy cannot reach—no crime that repentance cannot wash away—no state which the grace of heaven cannot remedy. Fear not, poor child, to throw yourself upon the willing clemency of your Father! Fear nothing but the desperate suggestions of the Arch-Enemy of man!"

The eye of the preacher was upon me; I felt it passing through my frame—curdling my blood—startling my spirit. I had no power to keep back. I could not withhold my own excited gaze. It was drawn—dragged from me—by a sorcery that it were to no purpose to oppose. Gradually, and blushing to the forehead, I raised my eye upward; and there, like a bright star, shone full and most benignantly upon me the blue and lustrous orb. I had no longer a sense of shame. It had passed away like a vapour beneath the holy light. The hand of the minister was extended—the finger pointed to me. I listened with transfixed attention. "I am here this night," said he, "with authority and with the means to save you from perdition—*you* sinner—you who would court destruction, and with your own hand seal your eternal fate. Believe not that a violent death shall put an end to the natural consequences of a violent life. Madman, it renders them more terrible, more painfully acute. The woes of him have not begun who seeks to end them in a self-dug grave. The bitterest tears of earth are honey-drops compared with those he sheds beyond it. Take courage. Repent—and be a man worthy your immortal destiny and future glory. Flee from the Tempter. I warn you that even now, this very night, this very hour, this very moment, for the vilest of mankind, for the poorest of self-condemned and trembling sinners, there is hope—there is joy—there is pardon, if he will seek it with a contrite spirit from the Father of men and King of kings. '*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*' I tell you this not without authority, I speak with the voice of my Master. Before me are my credentials. Scorn them and be lost—believe and be saved." He ceased, or, if he continued, I heard no more. I shook with wonder and alarm. I was satisfied that I had been the subject of a miracle—the more convinced of it, as I attempted to collect the various circumstances which, growing one upon another, had gradually brought me into my present situation. "Here," thought I, "is the hand doomed to pluck me from the consuming fire—the hand that has been fore-ordained from all eternity for that benevolent and gracious object." I could not be deceived. The sermon had been preached for *me*. It met my case. The preacher's eye singled me from the innumerable congregation; and at me—to my very heart, he aimed his barbed weapons—wounding me—lacerating me—but striking only to save. The heavy sweat poured down my cheeks, and I smiled—half conscious of my doings—most gratefully upon the minister. He marked me with close attention, or I grossly erred. I clasped my hands—and internally thanked God, my eyes dropping the while tears of extreme rejoicing, for the peculiar love which he evinced towards me. "Yes, yes!" I exclaimed,

"I will repent—I will throw myself before my Father; I will not destroy myself, but I will snatch my soul from hell." A new song of thanksgiving, the last hymn of the service, sung with new fire and louder acclamation, diverted for a moment the current of my thoughts—but added fuel to the flame that had been kindled. A stranger placed a book in my hand. I joined in the inspiriting anthem, and with a louder voice and stronger emphasis than any other, I invoked celestial pardon—for pardon and repentance were the subject of the song. The ceremony was concluded. The assembly dissolved, as it had come together—in crowds. The minister prayed in silence, amidst the tumult of the breaking-up. I gazed upon him, and dreaded the arrival of the fast-approaching minute that would move him from my sight. My soul clung to him as the anchor clingeth to the ground. He was, indeed, a friend newly found, and worth a world to me. I needed his presence for my support, and without him I feared to meet again with horrible suggestions, and the destroying eyes of the Tempter, which I could feel glaring at my back. The chapel was empty—every individual had left it. Still with entwined hands I stood, eagerly looking at the preacher. Slowly he descended from the pulpit, and not observing me, passed into the vestry. Instigated by an impulse that defied resistance, I followed him immediately. He was alone—and he turned his mild countenance feelingly upon me. I burst into a flood of tears, and falling upon my knees, implored him to make good his word, and to reconcile me to my God.

PART IX.

THE HISTORY OF EMMA FITZJONES.

How read we such sad scenes? As sent to man
In perfect vengeance? No: in pity sent
To melt him down, like wax, and then impress
Indelible, death's image on his heart,
Bleeding for others, trembling for himself.
Young.

My poor overtasked brain reeled with agitation, and I sank motionless and senseless at the feet of the minister. I remember to have been raised—to have heard a few kind words of consolation and encouragement—to have been carried by gentle and considerate hands to a coach—and to have passed at once into a sleep of long forgetfulness. I call to mind, also, the moment of breaking from the bondage of a heavy torpor. I lay in bed in a strange room, and no creature was near me. I knew myself to be awake; but a difficulty of fixing my thoughts to one point satisfied me that consciousness was darkened with disease. A book lay upon my pillow; it was the Bible. I took it up, and attempted to read. It was in vain. I experienced an acute darting pain at the temples, and the words flickered and glanced about the page. I replaced the book, and courted sleep again. This time, however, she came not—the throbbing in my head increased, and gradually the most poignant sensations harassed my exhausted frame. I would have kept quiet; but although I grasped the

sheet and pillow for security and support, I was sensible of locomotion—of being carried through the world—dragged forward without the power of checking the still increasing speed. I had no fear. A wild enjoyment accompanied the impetus, and a satisfying confidence that I should at last be deposited, wherever it might be, in safety. I gave myself up to the impulse more and more, until I experienced a recklessness of feeling that gave velocity to the wings, and intenseness to the power, that whirled me along. Then a flush came over me, and a dry heat swept throughout my frame, resting in my throat and my cheek, filling me with dread of suffocation and a speedy death. What ailed me? Was it fever—was it inflammation making its quick and fiery way straight to the seat of life? And where was I—who had taken charge of me? To whom was I indebted for the care that had been taken of me—for my present lodgment, and for the soft bed that received and eased my aching bones?

"A small table was at the bedside, and upon it a watch, a few bottles of medicine, a pair of spectacles, some needlework, and an open book. I could hear nothing but the ticking of the watch, and this sounded painfully loud in my ears; white dimity hangings were drawn partially around the bed, and curtains of the same material extended along the window, and kept the room in comparative darkness. I attempted to rise for the purpose of admitting light; but my head swam giddily, and my weak limbs gave way beneath me. I lay panting from the effort, when the door of the chamber softly opened. A tall and stout elderly female entered on tiptoe. She wore a high, matronly cap, and was in other respects soberly attired. She said nothing, but, taking her seat at the table, fixed the spectacles on her nose, turned over the book, and commenced reading.

"Good lady," said I, in a faltering voice, "tell me, where am I?"

"Oh, thank God!" she exclaimed, quickly taking off her glasses; "don't worry yourself, young gentleman—you'll soon be well now, and dear Mr. Clayton will be so happy. Take a glass of lemon drink. You mustn't excite yourself."

I drank the refreshing draught with avidity, and blessed the charitable hand that gave it.

"I am sure you'll get on very quickly now. I only wanted you to revive; but I must go to Mr. Clayton and the doctor directly. He told me to fetch him the moment you woke up. How do you feel now?"

"Oh, weak, madam—very weak! My heart beats heavily against my breast, my head is unsteady, and I burn with a scorching heat."

"Ah, yes! I know very well what it is. I have often had it—it's just like it. Your heart beats, and you are all over in a burn. I know it's very bad—poor young gentleman! Bless me, I thought you were never going to wake again. It's the horrid bile you have got. They'll give you something to take it off. Are you thirsty?"

"Yes, constantly."

"Ah, to be sure, that's it! It's going about, but it isn't dangerous. Don't talk—and keep quite still. You don't mind being left alone? I'll not be longer than I can help. If you are tired, you can read the book a little."

The lady left me. I spent a weary hour in an endeavour to compose myself; but my fever rose higher and higher, and I grew restless and irritable. The elderly lady returned, accompanied by a doctor.

The latter immediately felt my pulse.

"Has there been any shivering, nurse?" he enquired, turning to that personage.

"Oh, a great deal, sir; and he has got that nasty burning pain! My poor dear husband, that's dead and gone, had just the same before he died."

"You are warm, sir, are you not?"

"My cheek is on fire!" I replied; "my brain is hot!"

The doctor sat at my bedside for a few minutes; then prescribed some medicine, and retired, enjoining the nurse to preserve the strictest silence.

"Do not let him speak, nurse. Exclude the light, and keep the room perfectly tranquil. I shall see you in the morning, sir. Mind, Mrs. Dolby, he mustn't say a word."

"Oh, leave him to me, sir!" answered Mrs. Dolby. "I'll take care of him, poor gentleman."

The kind lady donned her glasses, and once more took up her book.

I turned languidly towards her, and found her little occupied with the volume, but mumbling some words to herself in a species of mute whisper.

A sharp pain across my brain caused me at the same instant to wince, and to moan deeply.

"What's that?" enquired Mrs. Dolby, and removing suddenly her spectacles.

"My head, nurse—my poor head!"

"Oh yes! I know; it flies about. It's rheumatics. It'll go all over the body. Poor Mr. Dolby was a martyr to the pains. It's a kind of stitch, isn't it? Now, I should say, your heart's a little better—am I right?"

"It doesn't beat quite so fast, perhaps," said I.

"No, I am sure it doesn't. Oh, bless you, I have seen so many of these cases! There's poor Mr. Williams over the way at No. 5—ah, I shouldn't wonder if I am called up to-night to lay him out—his wife's a poor helpless thing enough, and would no more know what to do with a corpse than a new-born infant—she has sent here twice this morning to know if I should be in the way—poor man, he can't last above a day or so! Well, I've known him to have the rheumatics so bad, that in the course of ten minutes he has had a pain in every limb of his body. It has begun in the great toe of his right leg, gone up his side, down the left leg, and out of the other great toe at last—made a regular revolution. But you mustn't talk so much. Dr. Meadows says you are to be kept perfectly quiet."

A dry burning sensation oppressed me, and I called for drink. Before I could swallow it the heat had passed away, and I shuddered with cold.

"That's the lemon drink!" exclaimed Mrs. Dolby. "It will do that at times; but your stomach must be dreadfully out of order. The fact is, you have had one of my old attacks, and it will take its own course. It's more alarming than dangerous. Well, I'm truly glad he didn't order leeches. I couldn't touch a leech to save my life. I have hated the sight of them ever since my dear husband bled for six hours without stopping. Folks say they are harmless. I never could believe it. But you really mustn't be allowed to talk so much. Now, try and go to sleep."

I made the attempt, but during the long dark night I was a waking sufferer. In the morning, overcome with lassitude, and yielding to the potent drugs which I had taken, I dropped into a thick and heavy sleep. After the lapse of a few hours I again awoke, and the fierce grasp of disease seemed for a period withdrawn. I received a second visit from the physician. He observed me attentively, and addressed Mrs. Dolby.

"Nurse," said he, "we are better."

"Quite a different creature, sir. May he take a little nourishment?"

"Yes, a little, but a *very* little. Something very simple."

"Some beef-tea—or a mutton chop done *rare*?"

"Not just now, nurse," said the doctor quietly. "Some gruel, if he wishes it—nothing better for the present."

"Well, you know best, sir, of course: but when dear Mr. Dolby's leg was bad——"

The doctor took his hat, and was about to depart—but I beckoned him back.

"Where is my benefactor?" I asked, my frame trembling with newly-awakened emotion, "where is the good minister?"

"Not a word," said the physician, assuming an air of mild authority, and placing his fingers on his lips. "You shall see him when you are able to bear the interview, and that time will soon be here. He is anxious to see you, and I shall not keep him away longer than is necessary for your safe recovery. He takes a warm interest in your welfare, and I shall gratify him with the news that I am enabled to communicate this morning."

The heart of the beggar was fluttered, and the tears burst from the grateful fount. "There," continued the physician, "I have done wrong. We have already spoken too much. You are weaker than you think. Quiet is absolutely necessary for your safety. Nurse, do not let him utter another syllable. Good-bye, my friend—God bless you!"

"Certainly not!" ejaculated Mrs. Dolby. "Oh, he's a clever man is Doctor Meadows!—Don't you think so, sir?"

I nodded in the affirmative.

"It's a thousand pities he doesn't marry. All my ladies long to have him, and if he'd take a wife to-morrow, I'd undertake to pay the expenses with confinements. The poor about here will have no one else; and I can tell you, though they pay nothing at all, they are more squeamish and particular than any. Now, do keep quiet—there's a dear young gentleman," continued Mrs. Dolby, alarmed because I turned in bed; "we must mind the doctor, or we shall do no good at all. Let me read to you a bit."

The scrupulously exact nurse commenced the didactic history of a converted Somersetshire lad. Before she had proceeded far, the distressing symptoms of my intermittent fever returned upon me with their earliest force. I could feel the hot suffocating flush creeping through my frame, and extending to my heart. My thoughts grew restive, and would not be fixed. Wild conceits, the immature creations of an overfretted mind, crowded into existence one upon another; and the quick blood, driven from its seat, beat like a hammer in the artery. Another weary night of continual motion and distress—another never-ending period of bodily pain and mental torture. In this state I remained for a week—comparatively placid and at ease during the first hours of the day—but becoming the subject and the slave of fierce tormentors as the day waned, and the black, the horrid, and the dreaded night advanced. Morning, noon, and night, I endeavoured to chase away the diurnal visitants with noxious and disgusting drugs; but whilst my frame shook beneath their operation, the demons were still unscared, and still haunted as obstinately as ever the tottering house of flesh. How and why they deserted it at last, I know not; but a day arrived, and they had flown, carrying with them from my very bones the marrow and the juice of life. I was cast upon my back drained of every energy, exhausted and spent. Nature, however, left to her own beneficent will, was not slow to repair the violent inroads of disease. Awhile she looked about her to survey the injury, and then—at

first with unperceived and mild appliances, but soon with manifest and vigorous power—lost not a moment in the restoration of the citadel. The physician had been a faithful friend, and Mrs. Dolby not useless at the bedside of the patient. Hers must have been a life of suffering and trial. Not a pang did I experience during the progress of my malady which she did not realise, and could not tally to the exactly corresponding pang that she had felt some twenty years before—not a symptom had I that was unknown to her—not a medicine did I swallow whose efficacy she had not tested. For every groan and throe she gave a formal cause—for every change of feeling a satisfactory explanation. In truth, many acute sensations and much uneasiness difficult for their victim to define, though hard enough to bear, she could immediately unravel and expound, and, if you pleased, trace to their first germ and origin. Greatly she respected the apothecary and the physician; but she was not forgetful of the nurse's higher claims to veneration and regard. She was aware how onerous were her duties and how boundless ought to be her learning; and, rather than confess her want of knowledge in a single point, she was content to be suspected of an universal ignorance.

I gathered from Dr. Meadows the history of the last few days. It was a short one. Whilst in a state of insensibility, I had been conveyed to my present lodging at the instance of Mr. Clayton. That benevolent man had provided for me medical attendance, and the all-powerful aid of Mrs. Dolby. He had engaged to discharge every expense that might be incurred, and had requested that nothing should be left undone that was necessary for my restoration and comfort.

"He is an old friend, I presume?" said Dr. Meadows.

"He is the kindest and the best of friends," I replied; "but until the day he brought me here I was a stranger to him. I never saw him before. You do not know how much I am indebted to him. I know and feel what he has accomplished for me. Twice he has saved my wretched life; but he has done much more than this. I can never repay him, but his reward awaits him elsewhere."

"He will come to you to-morrow," said the doctor; "he has desired me to tell you so. But do not excite yourself. You are touchwood and tinder, and may yet spoil all that has been done for you. You must behave better."

The morrow came, and at an early hour I received a visit from my benefactor. He approached my bed with a soft and careful step, took my hand in silence, and looked upon me with tenderness and compassion. I pressed his hand to my lips, and wept upon it, for my full heart would else have burst.

"Thank you, sir—thank you, sir!" I endeavoured to articulate.

"Say no more," replied Mr. Clayton, very gently. "God has been merciful to us both. Compose your mind, and think, for the present, only of improving the talent that has been restored to you. Your health is now the first consideration. When you have recovered that, we shall find many opportunities to revert with pleasure and improvement to the past. I will read to you now."

I need scarcely say, that I took an early opportunity to acquaint him with every incident in my career. I concealed nothing. My errors and my guilt I revealed to him as freely as the remembrance of them occurred to my own mind. I conducted him through my various fortunes, my temptations, and my trials; and told him how at last I had been checked by his admonishment, stung and startled by his denunciations.

Time sped on golden wings. Daily my affection ripened towards my friend, daily his regard and love for me increased. One, and one considera-

tion only, stood between me and consummate happiness; but that, alas! existed to mar and to embitter every moment of my too blissful state. I still lived upon the bounty of my preserver—was dependent upon him, not only for every high and intellectual enjoyment, but for my daily food and raiment. In the possession of strength and vigorous health, I was an idler and a hanger-on. "I will no longer," I exclaimed, "be a burden to the good man, preying daily and hourly upon his substance! I will not suffer evil tongues to whisper calumny against me, as they surely will, nor—much greater punishment to bear—permit one unkind, unworthy thought against me, to harbour in his own generous and gentle mind! I will thank him upon my knees for the past, and seek elsewhere a home for the future." Speedily I made my intention known to Mr. Clayton.

"Whither would you go?" enquired that gentleman, when I had finished.

"I cannot tell, sir," I replied; "I will seek employment."

"And not finding it at last—what then?"

"Oh, I shall be successful! I do not doubt it."

"Do not deceive yourself, young friend: *I* doubt it much. We forget in health the pains and trials of our previous sickness. Prosperity loves not to remember her former sad companion, pale misfortune. Throw yourself once again upon the world, friendless and unsupported, and again you sink. We must not think of it. I must not allow it. Believe me, I have not thought little of your future plans, and I have hoped to help you effectually. In one quarter I believed myself to possess influence and interest. I employed them on your behalf, but found them less efficient than I had supposed. I was disappointed, and, for your sake, grieved. It is a common occurrence, and should not dishearten us. I have turned my view in another direction: this time, I trust, with a better chance of success. But if we fail again, history and experience teach us not to despond at the outset of our attempts. Time is before us—why are you so eager to forsake me?"

"Dear Mr. Clayton," I replied, "my heart is full with the warm recollection of your bounty. I cannot think for an instant of your generosity—your charity—and not feel that heart bounding with grateful emotion. But my conscience tells me that I do wrong in remaining longer here. I am wretched and uneasy. I am restored to health, able to work, and I have no right to rob you of your means."

"Indeed you have not," replied Mr. Clayton with a smile, "and far be it from me to encourage so felonious a proposition. But we are not accustomed to say that they are robbed who freely part with what they have; much less they who, for their money, ask and obtain their money's worth. Have I not purchased your convalescence? Do I not see a living soul snatched from uncertainty and peril, brought back from darkness and its terrors, to light and all its blessedness? So much I proposed to myself, so much I have gained. I believe I have—God be praised for it! Would you deny me the pleasure that I have bought at such little cost? Would you refuse me the satisfaction and delight that moves an aged heart with something higher than mere earthly bliss?"

I knew not what to say.

"No, my dear friend," he continued, "this head would scarcely lie easy on its pillow, disturbed with doubts and fears respecting you. Willingly, I am sure, you would not give me pain; unwillingly you shall not, if I can help it. Reconcile yourself for one week longer to your present situation, or, at the latest, two. If I am not mistaken, fortune will do something for us in the meanwhile. Your ambition is not at war with

your happiness, and consequently gives us a chance of satisfying its demands. Selfish as we all by nature and of necessity are, I believe that I can resign you when the proper time arrives. Come when it may, I shall be honest enough to confess that it is still too soon."

I returned the affectionate pressure of the good man's hand, but my overloaded heart forbade a single word.

"Pardon me," continued Mr. Clayton, "if I revert to other matters. I will not tell you, that to give you one unnecessary pang would be a bitter thought to me. You are already convinced of that."

"Speak on, sir."

"I have not forgotten the history of your connexion with that unfortunate woman whom you met in Cambridge. You told me that you left her, as you believed, on her dying bed. Have you seen her since?'

"I have not, sir. My father remained but one day in Huntingdon. His short stay enabled him just to see the poor girl placed safely in the infirmary. On the evening of that day I attempted to take leave of her. She was still delirious, and did not recognize me. Her glazed eyes shrank from me when I approached her, and she screamed as before, '*the fiend, the fiend!!*' It was a miserable sight!"

"And what news of her from that time?"

"Alas, sir! I acknowledge with shame that my proper misfortunes, my own deplorable state, have made me—I dare not say *indifferent* to her fate—but not so careful in respect of it as indeed I ought to have been."

For the moment Mr. Clayton said no more. In a few days, however, the subject was resumed. Before a fortnight had elapsed we were both on our way to Huntingdon in search of news of the castaway.

We arrived in Huntingdon late at night, and went immediately to an inn. Mr. Clayton, fatigued from the journey, retired to rest without delay. We were within a street of the residence of Dr. Weezen. My curiosity prompted me to enquire after my old friend, and I sought our landlord for that object. In answer to my question whether he knew a gentleman of that name living in the town, he placed a county newspaper in my hand, bade me turn to the report of trials, smiled, and shook his head.

"What is this?" I asked.

"Manslaughter!" was his reply, "and within an inch of murder. I was on the jury, and I think I saved his life. It is more than he ever did for fellow-creature yet."

"What has he done?" I asked again.

"Read," he replied; "killed a youth that never offended him."

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "I was afraid that it would come to that. He was a desperate adventurer."

"Read his defence," continued my informant; "you'll find he is a desperate fellow altogether. As for talking, the lawyers were a flea-bite to him. 'Science,' he told the judge, 'would revenge upon his tyrants the fate of her disciple.' He spoke his mind to judge and jury."

"How did he accomplish the dreadful act?" said I.

"By what he called the *hot-water cure*. He had made many discoveries—this he considered his last and best. He boiled his patients. For the last six months, whatever the disease, he put them in a copper. For cold or fever, fullness or consumption, in his own words, 'he *simmered* them.' It brought, he said, the sickness to a crisis. If it would stand the boiler it would stand anything, and science couldn't reach it. The poor boy was skinned—he had cast his slough as clean as any serpent."

"And his punishment?"

"You'll see it all there. Five years' imprisonment. His shop's shut up, and the mortality amongst the poor, I am thinking, will be much less in Huntingdon for the next five years at least."

"Did you ever hear of a young man and female whom he had lodging with him some eighteen months ago?"

"Never. I knew nothing of the man himself until this affair was blown about."

I thanked the landlord for his news, wished him good-night, and retired to rest myself. I dreamed of Emma Fitzjones, and was once again driving with her rapidly through the streets of Huntingdon.

Early on the following morning my travelling companion and I visited the infirmary, and requested an interview with the matron of the institution. A lady dressed in a black silk gown, armed with a noble bunch of keys, and *matronly* in all respects, received us. Mr. Clayton spoke to her.

"I come, madam," said he, "to learn something of the fate of a poor girl who many months ago was admitted into this establishment. Her name is Emma Fitzjones."

"If you are a professional gentleman, sir, and know anything to her advantage," said the matron, interrupting him, "I can only say that I am very sorry she is not living to enjoy it. She has been dead some time, poor creature!"

"*The punishment of mine iniquity was accomplished.*" The words of the matron struck leaden-heeled upon my soul. To have had no share in the past—to have forgotten it for ever—to have been freed from the manacle that linked me to the fortunes of the departed—what would I not have given?

"I am not, as you suppose, connected with the law," said Mr. Clayton; "we came to be of service to the deceased. We would have been her friends. We arrive, unfortunately, too late."

The matron turned her eyes toward me as my companion spoke, and shame, or whatever it might be, gave me the pallid aspect of a criminal. I could feel it on my cheek.

"Surely you are not Mr. Stukely?" enquired the lady, suddenly, causing me in every joint to tremble.

"Yes, madam, that is my name," I faltered.

"Heaven bless me!" she ejaculated, "this is——" She hesitated, stopped—burst into tears, and hurried from her seat. "Pardon me, gentlemen," she continued, sobbing—"it was so sudden—it brought so many things to mind. She died in my arms."

"You know her history?" said Mr. Clayton.

"Every letter of it," answered the matron. "I would have given a hundred pounds, sir," she added, speaking again to me, "if I could have seen you before she died. It would have been a comfort to the poor Magdalen. I sent to Cambridge, and was referred to London. I wrote to you there, but my letter was returned to me with 'gone away' written on its cover."

"She died penitent then?"

"Oh, indeed she did, and like a lamb! She recovered from her dreadful disorder, but her body was very weak, and her mind sadly distressed. She never recovered her strength, nor did she wish it, poor sufferer!" continued the matron, wiping her eyes with her handkerchief, "longer than to enable her to make her peace with God, whom she had so much offended. I have a remembrance for you, Mr. Stukely, which I promised faithfully to deliver to you if ever the opportunity offered. It was only

the day before she died that she told me how satisfied she felt that one day you would come to see her, and that you were then detained by circumstances you could not overcome."

"Her last hours were very happy?" I asked, hesitatingly.

"Yes, certainly her last; but there were many passed in bitterness of spirit—in fear and self-reproach. At first her state was very pitiable; she had nothing to hope from the past—everything to dread from the future."

At this moment a knock at the door interrupted the conversation. The business of the day had commenced, and the presence of the matron was required in twenty different places. Food for the healthy as well as for the sick must be supplied, and the good lady must administer the rations.

"I am very sorry," said the matron, "that I must leave you now. When do you quit the town?"

"Our mission is fulfilled," I answered, "we have nothing more to do. We shall return to-night."

"Let me see you for an instant before you depart," said the lady, "and wait one moment now." She left the room in haste, and shortly came back with a sealed packet in her hand. It was addressed to "Mr. Stukely, London." "She bade me place it in your own hands. It was all she had to leave you, and she was sure you would not think less kindly of her on account of its contents. I repeat her dying words. And this is the remembrance that I spoke of."

I took the packet, and returned with my friend to our inn, having engaged to see the matron again previously to our departure for London that evening by the mail. I had nothing to say upon our road. My mind was busy with scenes which my late interview and familiar streets brought painfully to view. Time mis-spent, wickedly spent, and fruitful in lamentable events never to be improved, never forgotten—this was the heavy thought that pressed upon my spirits, and kept me silent. My companion likewise abstained from talk; he it might be with consideration and design, and to permit the salutary working of that thought upon the heart and conscience of the offender.

I lost not a moment, after we had reached our room, in possessing myself of the enclosure. Mr. Clayton would have retired; but I begged him to remain, and to witness the last communication of the unfortunate being in whose fate he had taken so kind an interest. I broke the black seal of the parcel, and found an ordinary school writing-book. Upon the cover was written, in a clear lady's hand, the following words—"*To Mr. Stukely, in memory of the writer;*" and on the first page, in the like handwriting, this announcement—"*The sad history of Emma Harrington.*" With the same feeling, and at the same moment, we drew our chairs to the table. I placed the manuscript in the hands of Mr. Clayton, and he read aloud to me the following narrative.

THERE is only one vice of which it can be truly said that it is the parent and begetter of all other vices—that it dooms its subject to destruction, certain and complete, and drags into the inevitable ruin every tie and every soul connected with the slave and victim of the lust. It is the vice of drunkenness. For centuries the tenure of this consuming passion has been the miserable inheritance of my race. I trace it up to the first discoverable shoot of the unsound tree—the canker is coeval with its origin. The patrimony descends to me, and there, I thank my God, becomes extinct! The purpose for which it was originally attached has been accomplished. The grievous sin that brought upon generations the

punishment incurred, perhaps, by *one*, has paid its last instalment—justice is satisfied—and the avenging hand is withdrawn.

Dear Stukely, pardon the unhappy wretch who united you to her fate. I know not at this moment what, in addition to my own crimes, I have to answer for on your account. I am ignorant of your affairs. They tell me you were forced away by the same hand that placed me here. Oh, it was a benevolent hand that did as much for both of us—that checked you in your career of error, and lightened the guilty burden of one who has already too much to cast before the throne of her offended Maker. "Could it have been his father?" I often ask myself. Oh, yes! it must have been—who else? And you are now restored to his arms—he has forgiven you, and you are happy. You will return to Cambridge, prosecute your interrupted studies, and assume that position amongst men to which your acquirements and your warm and honourable spirit so well entitle you. Ah! would that I could be assured of all this, and that my ears might take in the welcome sounds before they close for ever on the world. But, in the meanwhile, I will believe it, and seek to pacify the murmurs of a never-silent conscience. I have done you great wrong. It may be irreparable—although I trust not—fervently, fervently. If I can make you no proportionate amends, such as I can I will. You shall be told my miserable history—you shall read it, and then not curse the source and author of your woes. It is a testament due to the living. Read it, dear Stukely, and forgive the dying Emma. Read it *for your sister's sake*, if you have one that looks to you for protection and support.

I was born in the winter of the year 1780, and my birthplace was a lovely spot in one of the midland counties. My father was a clergyman of the established church; his name Harrington. I need scarcely tell you that the name Fitzjones was assumed at a later period of life, when my own conduct suggested the propriety of adopting it—not in order to keep disgrace from our family name, but to save it from an addition to the infamy that was attached to it wheresoever it was known. My father had lost his parents at an early age, but he was left, with a handsome fortune, to the care of his uncle—himself a man of influence and of great wealth. Fortunately for the children of the previous holders of my father's lands, the property had been entailed, and so far in bulk secured from the desperately mad extravagance that attends so constantly on drunkenness. My father, on the other hand, when he became of age, obtained absolute possession. How he used his privilege you will hear. At the age of twenty-three, my father quitted the university, and returned to the roof of his ancestors, and shortly afterwards his uncle procured for him, by purchase, a benefice in his native parish. A man less suited to his profession, less endowed with the qualities of heart and mind that are essential to a just performance of its duties, never, in a fit of recklessness or bravado, thrust himself into the sacred office. But let me do him justice. Thrust himself he did not. I have heard that before he went to the university he remonstrated with his uncle against being forced into *a trade*, as he termed it, in which he took no interest, and for which he had no taste. His fortune he considered ample for his desires, and study or reading of any kind was irksome and annoying. His guardian, however, was a man who did not well brook contradiction. He was a rude, severe, and vulgar man. It was his boast that he had in his youth swept the shop and cleaned the windows of the house, from which, in the prime of his manhood, he had retired with a hundred thousand pounds. He had resolved to have my father educated for the church. "There had never been," he said, "a bishop in the family; with money, he knew, anything might be

done in England, and he had made up his mind to see him on the bench." He left my father to choose between compliance with his wishes and the prospect of a noble inheritance, and non-compliance without a farthing. My father at length capitulated on terms. He undertook to become a parson on three conditions. In the first place, he was to enter the university as a fellow-commoner; secondly, it was not to be expected that he should read; and lastly, his uncle was to provide him with a handsome living, and take all trouble off his hands. Under such happy auspices he proceeded to the seat of learning, subscribed implicitly to the Thirty-nine Articles, and entered upon a life of riot and debauchery which ended only with his own career. How he underwent the necessary ordeal of an examination you may understand. I have heard him many times boasting of his success, and vowing that, during a period of three years, he had only read as many books in twice as many days. He took his degree—he was ordained—he became a parish priest. Two years after his ordination he met with my mother, a delicate and lovely girl, the daughter of a farmer in the neighbourhood, and a man of great worth and respectability.

My father saw my mother, and the impression made upon him at their first interview, by her innocence and beauty, decided her future fate. He was madly in love with her, and in spite of the strong representations of his uncle, who had already provided a wife for him after his own taste, within a month he asked her in marriage. My dear mother—all weakness, love, and duty then, as she was ever—obedient to the will of her father, accepted him as a suitor, and gave her hand and her heart wholly to a man who never learned their value. Stukely, this heart has been distressed and wrung—you know it—when I have called to mind that mother's wrongs. I mourn no longer. I go to join her where she is at peace. Angels, who love the patient and the suffering, protect a kindred spirit, and cherish it in heaven! She was a stranger amongst men. She consented to become his wife. His uncle disinherited him for the act, and the nephew never afterwards pardoned my mother for the crime.

My father's character gradually developed itself after this crisis in his life. Forsaken by his uncle, it was expected that he would retire from an occupation that had never been pleasing to him, and which had been followed only in consequence of the understanding already referred to. But he did no such thing. He held his incumbency, and discharged his obligations. Thrown upon his own resources, he was not slow to avail himself to the full extent of the help they could afford him. For a few years, he persevered in a line of conduct that won for him the good-will and regard of the world, and so effectually, that they were withdrawn with pain and reluctance at a later period, when his flagrant and undisguised behaviour rendered him unworthy of either. He was attentive to the poor, and mixed with the powerful and the rich in his cure. Mildness and humanity characterized his demeanour with the former; servility and cringing his intercourse with the latter. These were the out-door sacrifices imperiously demanded from his selfishness; home and its devoted victims paid the penalty in bearing tyranny and persecution.

A year after her marriage, my mother brought into the world my brother Frederick. I was born two years later. We were their only offspring. I was five years old when I became aware, for the first time, that man and wife, though linked together by the strongest chains, may, at the same time be wholly distinct and separate from each other. It was not without alarm, even at this tender age, that I felt the burning tears of my mother falling upon my neck; nor, whilst she hung over me,

her voice half-stifled, murmuring in distress my father's name, did her accents fall upon my infant ear in vain. Her maternal heart was overflowing with love for *me*. She could not tell how much she loved dear Frederick and myself, and my little heart beat deeply for them both. I could not bear to see her cry. No loss in my little but important world could give me half the pain that I experienced when I beheld the habitual sorrow of my mother.

The habit which I have already mentioned, as belonging by a cruel necessity to our family, developed itself in my father's case in very early youth. It was encouraged and perfected at the university. This vice added strength and bitterness to every bad quality that he possessed. Cruel and overbearing at other times, when under the influence of strong drink he became a furious madman. Surprising as it may seem, this man, upon whose head no day closed during which he had not treated my mother with violence and harshness that were intolerable as they were unparalleled, could, once beyond his own gates, adorn his lip with smiles, and assume a garb of Christian kindness and consideration. Open to the grossest flattery himself, he was a sycophant in the most extensive sense of the word; and by the poor and necessitous, whose affection and good word are ever to be gained at a price, and amongst whom he scattered indiscriminate alms in the terror of his conscience-stricken moments, he was spoken of as a man who was preparing for himself, by charity and good works, "an incorruptible crown of glory that fadeth not away."

My dear and patient mother—forbearing and patient under injury as she was herself tender and inoffensive—bore her wrongs but too meekly. Although worn out with grief, she never complained. At home, we knew nothing beyond the tears and sighs, and drooping countenance, which were not to be hidden. Indistinct were the ideas which these enabled me to form respecting the cause of all her affliction. Both my brother and myself were studiously kept at a distance from the rooms occupied by our parents, and our sleeping-room was far enough from theirs to prevent our hearing anything that passed after they had retired to bed—alas! not to rest!

It was my mother's custom to come into our nursery every morning before breakfast, to read a portion of Holy Scripture, and afterwards to kneel with us in prayer. My father never accompanied her. As I grew up, I was struck on these occasions by the change which had taken place in her appearance during the night. She had evidently been robbed of sleep. Her eyes were red and swollen, her face wan and pale, her hand dry and feverish. For months, these symptoms continued, and the poor victim became weaker and weaker, more and more sorrowful.

The events of one morning are deeply engraven on my memory. Childhood and its joys ceased then. Knowledge came to me to perplex and grieve. I had reached my seventh year. My mother came to pray to her children as usual. Her Bible opened at the 5th chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Ephesians. She was very wretched, and she proceeded in her task with a thin weak voice. She came to the words, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess;" and my brother looked up to me, as her lips quivered and her pale hand trembled. She had not selected the lesson; but one more appropriate she could scarcely have chosen. "*Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. . . He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it.*" She had not spoken the words before, completely overcome by the violence and rapidity of her feelings, she burst into a flood of tears. The Bible dropped.

She buried her face in her hands, and then passionately sobbed and wept, as if her heart were falling to pieces, and as I had never heard man, woman, or child sob and weep before. I was frantic; but little Frederick looked upon my poor mother in silence, and knit his brows, and clenched his infant fist.

My mother, however, soon recovered herself; and then, without looking at either of us, or uttering one word more, she left the room. Frederick ran after her; but when she perceived him, she quickened her steps. He was too nimble for her, and when she reached her own room, he was at her side, and they entered it together. He was flushed, and looked wildly at her. For a moment, he seemed as if he knew not what to do or say. At last, he threw himself into his mother's arms, and cried—

"You hate me, mother! You hate me, I know you do!"

"What do you mean, Frederick?" she asked.

"Why," said he, "you are ill, and are in great suffering, and you keep it to yourself, and never speak to me about it."

"I am quite well in health, Frederick," she said, endeavouring to compose herself, and to satisfy him.

"Oh no, you are not!" he answered; "if you are, why do you cry so? You make me wretched, you do. It will kill me soon, and you will be sorry for it then."

"For what?" asked my mother. "Tell me, dearest heart, what shall I do to make you happy?"

"Let me know what father says to you," he replied quickly, and in a different tone. "I am sure you don't love me, or you would have told me before. Why don't you let me take your part?"

"Frederick," said my mother, "you know I love you dearly; and that much of my little share of happiness on earth depends upon you, my sweet boy. I am sure of your affection, too, for you have ever been most dutiful. You have never once disobeyed your mother. Ask me no questions, dearest, which I cannot answer. I shall soon be well again. I am only weak. You have always attended without a murmur to your mother's bidding. You will do so now. Return to the nursery, and take no notice of what has happened. I have behaved very ill at prayers. It shall not occur again. Go, dear boy."

Frederick would have made some reply, but my mother held up her finger with an air of kind remonstrance, and he said nothing. He departed without another syllable. I encountered him on the stairs, where, taking me by the hand, and urging me forward, he exclaimed in a tone of vexation and suppressed anger, "Come, Emma, mamma doesn't care for us. If she is ill again, I sha'n't mind it at all. It is nothing to me." And a tear started to his eye, and his little lip quivered, giving the lie to every word he spoke.

The day passed on, and nothing more was heard of this occurrence. About eleven o'clock at night, I was frightened out of a deep sleep by a tapping at the door of my bedroom. I was terribly alarmed, and the more so in consequence of the previous disturbance at prayers, which had furnished me with an endless series of distressing dreams. My name was called in a low, sharp whisper, and I crept from my nurse's side to listen at the keyhole. I accomplished this without waking her, and then I summoned courage to ask the name of the intruder.

The voice of Frederick answered me, still whispering.

"It is Fred," said he; "come with me, Emma. I have found it all out."

"Found what out, dear?" I answered.

"About father and mother. Don't wait, but open the door quietly, and

come as you are. You mustn't wait to dress yourself; if you do, we shall be too late."

I opened the door noiselessly, and discovered my brother in his night-dress, holding in his hand a rushlight, secured in a wire gauze shade.

"What is it all about, Frederick?" I enquired anxiously.

"He is killing mother, I am sure," he replied. "I have listened at the door for the last hour, and you can't think how he is talking, and she is crying, just as she did this morning. Don't you be a coward," he added, taking my trembling hand, "but come with me, and just whisper as I do." He led me on tiptoe towards the sleeping apartment of our parents. As he approached it, he walked more carefully, and at last he stopped.

"Hush!" said he; "There—do you hear?"

"No!" I answered, "I hear nothing."

"Well, wait a moment. There again."

"No, Frederick," I said, "it is nothing at all. I shall go back again."

"You are deaf, Emma," he exclaimed hastily, and in anger; and he applied his ear again to the door. "Now," said he, "don't speak a word. I hear him. He has called her some name, and she is crying quite loud."

He drew me close to his side. We held our breath, and listened for a time with strained attention. A burst of anguish from the lips of my poor mother, and then long and piteous sobbing succeeding it, as thunder does the flash, startled me, and sent me clinging into my brother's arms.

"Yes, that's it!" he said, "I heard it before for an hour together. Hush! listen!" My mother was weeping amain, loud and unrestrained, and the words that struggled through her tears reached easily our ears.

"For Heaven's sake, Harrington," she exclaimed, "think of the children! What will become of them? You are killing me. Robbed night after night of my natural rest, treated as I am by you through every hour of my existence, I look for nothing else than speedy death. It could not come too soon, but for the dear children. What will become of them when I am sacrificed?"

"Give me the brandy, wretch!" said my father, in a thick gruff voice.

"No more to-night, Harrington," she answered, "you can scarcely stand now. Pray, get to bed. For the last four nights I have not taken off my clothes; I am sinking with fatigue: do show me a little mercy."

"Mercy, you infernal——!"

"What does that mean?" asked Frederick sharply, and pinching my arm with excessive agitation.

"I don't know," I answered weeping, and crushing my tears at the same time; "but let us go to bed again—I am afraid to stay."

"No, I shan't go," said Frederick; "you may if you please. I shall wait here. Go: I shall not come for you again."

"Oh, Frederick, I couldn't leave you for the world! What shall we do!"

"Keep quiet," said my brother, "and hear all we can."

"Why the d—l, woman, am I kept here?" roared my father, mad with liquor. "Will you give me brandy, or shall we set fire to the house again?"

"Oh for the love of Heaven, Harrington, do not repeat that trick! In another instant, and we should have been burned to death."

"Burn!" was the husband's reply: "it would have been a good day's work for me if you had burned, roasted, and rotted, before I ever met with you. Haven't you been the cause of my ruin?"

"You are raving."

"I am neither mad nor drunk. If you haven't ruined me, tell me what has become of my uncle's property?"

"This is the old story, Harrington. You tell me of this hour after hour, as if I could have prevented what has passed, or repair it now. Am I to be always blamed for the harshness of your own relative? I warned you of your risk, and wished you to consider well the step——"

"Oh, none of your cant here! It sickens me to hear you. Where is the brandy, I say?"

"I have locked it away. You have had more than enough to-night. This hand, Harrington, shall never do you so much wrong as to offer you the burning poison whilst you are in your present helpless situation."

"Give me the key, I say!" cried my father, kicking the chair from under him, as we supposed, for we heard it fall with violence, and himself stamping and reeling on the floor. There was a short scuffle and a moment's silence, then a shriek from my mother, and a guttural noise proceeding, it might be, from strangulation.

"Oh, Fred, Fred!" I exclaimed, giving free egress to my gushing tears, "what is that—what has happened? Mother is dying."

Frederick made me no answer. The bedroom door was not locked. He opened it with violence, and entered the apartment. I followed him, crying aloud, and shaking from head to foot with terror. It was a melancholy scene. My mother sat at the end of the bed, white as its draperies, sighing convulsively and wringing her hands. My father was before a raging fire, whose flaming coal was piled high into the aperture of the chimney. My mother was attired as in the daytime, but her head was uncovered. The cap which had adorned it was consuming in the fire, having been torn from her and cast there by my father, who now contemplated its destruction with the drunken chuckle of an intoxicated fiend. My mother, as soon as she perceived us, and could recover from astonishment, rushed eagerly towards us, and placed herself between us and my father.

"Oh, my poor, dear children!" she exclaimed at the same moment.

"What do they want here?" bellowed my father, staring wildly first at my brother and then at me.

"Go to bed, dear Frederick," said my mother, imploringly, to the little child.

"I sha'n't," he answered, his pretty cheeks swelling with rage and unnatural excitement. "I sha'n't go, if you don't go with me, mother."

"What!" exclaimed the drunken man, rising with difficulty from his chair, and preparing himself evidently for violence.

"Oh go, go, dear!" cried my mother, clasping her hands, and looking most entreatingly on Frederick. "Go, before he murders you!"

"What do you mean by that, wretch?" said he, seizing her by the wrist.

His hand was scarcely on her arm before my brother flew at the aggressor, like a young eagle on its prey. My father seized him by the throat—my mother screamed, and ran between them. I called aloud to all, but could not move for dread and apprehension. It was an awful sight—father and child struggling together in active enmity, and with evil passion, hot and unbound as it exists in devils. Search through the calendar of crime—recall the sights that pall and sicken you, that send through every fibre of offended nature the horrible chill of loathing—and confess that the hand of the child, lifted against the author and parent of its life, surpasses all in fearful ugliness and depravity. Nature thus deformed I had never seen before. I shudder and grow cold as I realise the monstrous picture. I know not how the impious contest ended. Frederick was torn from the iron grasp of his father, and carried almost insensible to his own room. He had fainted, either from excessive exertion, or from the punish-

ment he had received; for my father had not dealt lightly with him. I remember that my mother accompanied Frederick to his bed, and sobbed piteously over him; and I recollect well that the last glimpse I had of my father, as I quitted his presence, was when he drew his chair savagely to the fire, and sat there grinning at the goodly work he had performed. Higher and higher he built his mountain of coal, and more fearful grew the rampant flames. I can tell you little more. I awoke on the following morning with every nerve in my weak body loosened and unstrung. My limbs had burst the bonds that held them in unity and subjection, and anarchy prevailed throughout my frame. My eyes rolled ceaselessly; my tongue leapt from my mouth, and, like an idiot's, moved along my lips: arms, hands, and feet—every feature, and every muscle, were at liberty; and, whilst the freedom lasted, used it wildly. The fright of the previous evening had fallen upon my system with a whelming shock, and the restless dance of Saint Vitus was upon me.

This is the first tragic scene that I can remember—would it were the last!—of a home made dismal and desolate by the withering presence of one unholy vice. When my calamity was removed, and I recovered from my illness, I learned that my brother was at a boarding-school, and many miles away. My mother had placed him there without the knowledge of my father; and, notwithstanding the urgent and repeated requests of the latter, she would not communicate to him the place of his residence. To punish her, as he expressed it, for her persevering obstinacy, in a moment of partial intoxication, and for a hundredth part of its value, he disposed of a considerable portion of his inheritance, giving her to understand, at the same time, that if this act did not bring her to obedience, he would try what could be done by selling the remainder. It is hardly necessary for me to say that the produce of this sale replenished the cellars of the drunkard, and filled them to the very roof with the deadly elixir.

It was impossible for my father to persist in his vicious course without attracting the notice, and bringing upon himself the open remarks, of men. I have already told you, that for a few years he commended himself to the world by his behaviour, and secured the favour and good-will of his parishioners, by flattering the rich, and *acting* offices of kindness on behalf of the poor. But it became daily less and less easy for him to hide, beneath the hypocrite's cloak, the corroding inroads of his master passion. In spite of the folds, the ulcer was there apparent. Slight improprieties of conduct were at first revealed, but to these were added, at a later period, faults of a deeper dye. He had been found inebriated and insensible in the broad day. He had spoken ribaldry and unmeaning jargon at the bedside of a dying woman, to whom he had been called to administer the last sacrament. He had reeled to his pulpit, and had mounted it with the aid of his servant; but, blindly intoxicated, and unable to perform his duties, he had been afterwards carried from it and conveyed to his home. These were facts which courted observation, and were passed from mouth to mouth. The parishioners were scandalised, and the minister was remonstrated with. He listened to the rebuke; and then, it is said, he wept—so acutely did he appear to feel the cruel and unexpected imputation. He denied, with vehemence, the charge so eagerly preferred against him by his enemies. He confessed, with sorrow, that he was a poor afflicted man, labouring under a malady that brought upon him deep mental suffering, bitter bodily pain; but he defied the harshest of them all to prove a greater sin against him. The impression, however, was not to be taken from the minds of his accusers; but for the present they urged no more. It was not long after this interview that a party in the neigh-

bourhood became known by the name of the "minister's men." It consisted principally of the humblest individuals in the parish, and they constituted themselves the champions and supporters of my father's cause. They waged war against any who hinted at his unhappy failing, and demanded on all sides sympathy for his bodily infirmities. Borne upon the voices of these men, and placing, as he could with a motive strong enough to incite him, a moderate restraint upon his passion, he contrived for a short period to stem the tide of opposition, which, having once turned, had never ceased to roll against him. But the demands of the tempter were not to be suppressed, however they might be resisted or dallied with for a season. Once more, and very soon, he yielded undisguisedly to the engrossing lust—fresh delinquencies arose—sacrilege was repeated again and again—murmurs grew to complaints—complaints to accusations, and at length my father ceased to be the incumbent of his native parish. The immediate cause of his retirement was an act of brutality perpetrated against my unfortunate mother. He had, on this occasion, treated her with more than his ordinary severity. He struck her in the most cowardly and unprovoked manner. A maid-servant had witnessed the action, and her indignation was aroused. She threatened and upbraided him, and vowed that she would publish his conduct wheresoever he was known. Upon the following morning she received her dismissal. Before evening, the scene was circumstantially narrated to every creature in the parish. My mother's wrongs were—if it were possible—exaggerated; her uncomplaining nature and her meekness—no representation could heighten *them*—discussed and pitied. A few members of the congregation who had signalised themselves throughout my father's career by their acknowledged hostility, now visited their pastor, and represented to him the propriety of an immediate resignation of his cure. They carried with them a written statement of his proceedings during the past twelvemonth, which they gave him to understand would be forwarded without delay to the bishop of the diocese, should he refuse to comply with their demand, or hesitate one moment in his decision. "It was in consideration of his wife alone," they added, "that they had prevailed upon themselves to act so leniently towards a man who had forfeited every claim upon their mercy and regard." My father was abashed and cowed, and gladly accepted release on any terms. He had never been a man of courage. What man of courage ever yet, by systematic cruelty, crushed and destroyed the fragile flower that clung about him for support? What man of courage ever stained his manhood by inflicting blows upon a weak and unoffending woman? It is the mongrel cur, and not the lion, that trembles whilst it snarls. Dissipation had given to his hands the native motion of the heart. Those shook from intemperance, as this from natural fear. He stood before his fellow-men, the meanest, the most debased and cowardly of his sex. Be sure he loved not my mother the better for the influence of her good name, and for the mitigation of punishment that name had silently effected. They departed in company—she, not sorry to forsake an abode painfully associated with her history—he, poor shallow reasoner! regarding his wife as the cause of his misfortunes; and with his hatred against the miserable creature increased a hundred-fold. The living was sold. With half the proceeds he purchased a three years' interest in a benefice, the property of a youth, who, yet a minor, was prosecuting his studies in the University of Oxford. The other half supplied him with wine, his only food—with fresh fuel for the raging passion which had not yet consumed him. It was his boast that he would live long enough to

spend every farthing that he possessed. That he should die leaving the means of subsistence to his wife and children, came not within the range of possibility. He had resolved that it should be otherwise. To Kent we now journeyed, sad pilgrims! My brother was still at school. He had not been permitted to return home since he quitted its roof. My mother was terrified at the thought of another meeting between him and his father. The latter, in every fit of drunkenness, swore vengeance against "the villain who had attacked him;" and distressed to agony my poor mother with a cold-blooded description of the modes he would employ to torture and to kill him, when he should fall again into his power. Frederick had often written from school, imploring my mother to receive him at home for her protection; she would not listen to the request, but conjured him, with every expression she could make use of, to remain contentedly where he was, and not to add to the wretchedness of her condition. I have a packet of her letters now before me. Scarcely a day passed that did not find her writing to her son. She lived in constant dread of beholding him. To have seen him cross the threshold, I do believe would have been fatal to her. She was convinced that my father had resolved upon his death, and an habitual presentiment satisfied her, that she should live to see the horrible deed committed. I take up a letter at random. Read the earnest entreaty of the mother to the banished child—"Dearest, dearest Frederick, my own sweet boy! May I be quite certain that you will spend the coming vacation at your school? What books, what things may I send to you for your instruction and amusement? Time will pass very quickly with your kind Mr. Percival; and the school days will so soon come round again, and you will be with your old companions, and in their society forget the trials to which you are unfortunately subjected. Oh! it is a sweet time of the year! How I envy you—the gambols up and down hill, and your pretty walks and daily pleasures! And you are so well, too! What a happiness this is to me! How I long to have you with me—you know I do, and a day will come when we shall feel blessed with one another! But it must not be now. I feel so very easy when I am assured of your absence—it is a very hard thing to say, and I could not say it, dear Frederick, to any boy except yourself; but you are so good and kind to your mother, and would not give her pain for all the world. If you should come to us, your father would be more unkind than he has ever been, and he remembers well the last night that you passed with him. He speaks of it often, and with much sharpness and severity. I can bear all that I have now to suffer without repining, as long as I am sure that you are safe. Think how comforting it is to make your mother happy in her mind, and then I am sure you will cheerfully comply with all she wishes." Frederick reiterated his importunities; but he doated on his mother, and he ceased to disturb her when he found his solicitations grieved and afflicted her. It was shortly after our arrival at the new parsonage that we contrived to receive Frederick on a visit of a few days. Business connected with the living had carried my father to London for a short time. It was the first interval of quiet that we had known for years. The house became on a sudden a peaceful and a sweet abode—a receptacle for angels. You cannot conceive, it is hardly possible to believe, that an alteration so sudden and so perfect could have taken place. The change in my own spirit was marvellous. I felt as if I had been imprisoned from infancy, fettered for ages in a dreary dungeon; and that for the first moment in my life I walked about erect, in freedom and in light. My very features seemed to relax in the improved reviving atmosphere. My brow became unknit—

my eye dilated and sparkled with awakened animation. I tripped from room to room, my unembarrassed foot scarcely conscious of the ground. In every nook was peace—over the entire dwelling was expanded the pacific and protecting wing of a heavenly and pure intelligence. All was intense tranquillity. Yes, it is true, one human being, darkening with his pernicious shadow a bright and spotless scene, makes paradise a pandemonium. Timid as the fawn are the gentle deities of the domestic hearth—a harsh word scares them, and makes a palace desolate. My mother and I walked from the village in which we dwelt to meet my brother at the market-town through which the coach passed, distant some four miles from our home. It was a land of enchantment that we traversed—or the earth had re-assumed its pristine innocence and glory. It was so very fair! Hand in hand we went along—the smile crept from my mother's heart and ventured to her cheek. My grateful soul bounded with delight to give the stranger welcome—my tongue grew voluble—my spirit was drowned in inundating mirth. It was a moment to have died. Eagerly I looked through the long street of the town for the arrival of the stage, but more eagerly my mother. Active and nimble were my eyes and feet—how much more hers! It was not long before we caught sight of his handsome face straining from the coach-window, at whose door we stood impatiently. He had grown very tall. For years I had not seen him. He had reached his sixteenth year, but he looked four years older. His features were noble and expressive. The character of the Spaniard was impressed upon them rather than that of the Englishman. His glossy jet-black hair hung loosely to his shoulders. His complexion was dark; his eye black, sharp, and penetrating. An aquiline nose gave to that eye a fiery keenness like unto the eagle's, and the glare was not always easy to endure. When he took his mother by the hand, and kissed her passionately in the public road, a crimson flush mounting to his eyes expressed the stroke that her sad and altered countenance had immediately inflicted on him; and, in truth, she was paler than ever, with the confluence of many feelings battling in her bosom. We returned to the parsonage together. He walked between us; one hand clasped lovingly my mother's—the other was around my waist. How much sorrow and trouble did I forget in the sweet consciousness of a brother's love!—a brother newly found, noble in form as he was affectionate and tender in disposition. How proud I was to be his sister! and how I listened to every word he uttered with the reverence and belief due to superior wisdom and intelligence! I asked him a hundred questions touching his pleasures and pursuits—causing interrogatory to tread upon the heel of answer, until the latter halted, hopeless to keep pace. The cares and the anxieties of adolescence melt before one ray of passing sunlight—not so the deep corroding woes of maturer life. With my brother I was gay and jocund, as though my couch from infancy had been a bed of roses—had never been disturbed by hard and prickly thorns. My dear mother wept as she proceeded, for the present happy moment reminded her of the joy that she had lost. Frederick, at first all animation and excitement, was fluent and cheerful in his talk; but he watched his mother till her blanched cheek and tearful eye silenced his tongue, and carried heaviness to his heart. We arrived at our residence, and then my mother, remarking the depression of Frederick, assumed a cheerfulness that lacked serenity enough to cheat the shallowest observer. She smiled and spoke to him of his master, Mr. Percival, and enquired whether the quaint boy, of whom he used to send in his long letters such humorous

accounts, still lived, and was still his chosen playmate. "You described him so cleverly, Frederick," said my mother, "I hope you are still good friends."

"How long is this to last, mother?" he said, speaking in return to her question, though not replying to it.

"What, child?" she asked.

"Your miserable way of life. It is shocking to behold you. Are you never to be released from your terrible situation? He will murder you."

My mother made no answer.

"I shall not return to school until something is done for your relief. The father of one of my schoolfellows is a lawyer, and he tells me that the law will help you."

My mother shook her head.

"Ah, but I know better!" he replied; "if for our sakes, if for Emma and me, you will have courage to state your grievances, they will not suffer you to be persecuted."

"The grave, Frederick, the grave," she said seriously, "is the only friend that can interpose between me and your father. It is in vain that I look nearer for help. The hand of the law is dull and sluggish when a weak woman would raise it on her behalf. Man is jealous of the rights of man. It is his right to use us as he pleases. He believes it is. We are not ignorant of the fact when we resign our liberty, and throw ourselves upon his mercy. I have been unfortunate. It is not so with all."

"I will confront him," said Frederick passionately, "and compel the tyrant to be merciful. It is my duty, and I will do it."

"No, you will not, Frederick," answered my mother calmly; "you will not forget the terms upon which this interview takes place—you will not forfeit your word—you will not break your mother's heart. All this you will do—and more than I dare think of, if you act so rashly. You do not require me to repeat now what I have said to you before a hundred times. You must not—*shall not* see your father. There is nothing to be done for me. I must bear the inevitable yoke. Heaven will give me strength; for I have prayed, and found it. There is one thing I cannot bear—it is the disobedience of my boy. Your dutiful affection has sustained me in the darkest hours of life. I have nothing to live for when that is taken from me."

It was with appeals of this nature that my mother checked every attempt on the part of my brother to remain at home until the return of his father. He implored her to grant him permission so to do. He promised sacredly that he would not be violent or upbraid his parent—that he would reason calmly with him—that he would speak respectfully and like a son—that he would be satisfied to secure for her an amicable separation, and peace for the future, without irritating him with references to the past. It was in vain. No eloquence could conquer her—no entreaty move her. She dreaded, with a horror that was not to be suppressed, an interview between father and son; and no pleading could alter her steadfast resolution to prevent it. Frederick remained four days with us. After the first evening he made no mention of his father. My mother put an end to his requests by telling him that it grieved and distressed her when he spoke of her wrongs, and that she should be much happier if he reverted to them no more. He was silent, and almost sullen from that time. Twenty little artifices did my mother play to rouse him to good-humour, and to satisfy him that she had spoken all in love, and not in anger. But her success was little. He sat at home from morning to night, moody and inactive, reading perhaps for half an hour—then holding the

book upon his knee for as long a time—his eyes bent towards the ground and his lips pressed hard and close together. When we had walked homeward after our first greeting, he promised me sweet country-walks and pastime on the road such as I had never heard of. He had learned botany, and he could tell me all the secrets of the little flowers, which were revealed but to a chosen few who loved to gossip with them in their lowly homes. All this he had forgotten. Air and exercise displeased him, and he scarcely passed the threshold until he took his melancholy leave of it, and journeyed back to school. I accompanied him to the market-town, and saw him safely on the coach.

"Emma," he said at parting, "mother must take her own course. I have obeyed her; I have not spoken to her again of father and his treatment, and I never will if I live a hundred years. In twelve months I am to leave school and to go abroad. I am glad of it; I wish to be away; I am quite satisfied now of one thing—mother loves father after all, and she cannot bear the thought of leaving him."

"Indeed you are mistaken, Frederick," I replied. "I know her better than you do. It is for us that she suffers everything, and for your sake alone that she keeps you from that wicked man."

"Well, I don't see it," he said recklessly; "and I don't care. Good-by, Emma. I wish I was dead, for I am tired of my life."

"Don't talk so, Frederick," I answered. "What shall I do if mother is taken from us? I couldn't live with *him* an hour. I shall be thrown on the world."

"No, no, Emma—not whilst I live. Don't mind what I say when I am irritated. I am very irritable. You shall find me an affectionate brother. I shall write to you directly I get to school, and oftener than I have done of late."

"Oh, and do write to mother too, Frederick; it will make her so happy! She thinks that you have gone away angry with her."

"Give her that kiss, Emma, and tell her it is no such thing. And take that for yourself. Here comes the coach—God bless you, dear!—good-by." So he departed.

On the evening of the same day my father returned to the parsonage. His affairs had been arranged in London sooner than he anticipated. Gloom pervaded once more the habitation; but we thanked Heaven that the safety of Frederick was provided for. It would be tedious and offensive to prosecute in detail the narrative of this wretched man. The history of one day in the career of the drunkard, is the history of his life. A circumstance at this period it is necessary, however, to notice. Fretted and agitated by the violence of his demeanour on one occasion, I was unable to repress my swelling anger; and I spoke to him, in the bitterness of my heart, as I had never ventured to address him in my life before. My words astounded him for the moment; and they were so far useful to my mother, for they deprived her of his undivided abuse. He glared sottishly at me for an instant, and then, raving at the top of his voice, vowed he hated me as he had never hated any earthly creature, and that he should live to behold me dropping a corpse before his very feet. This prophecy did not frighten me. It was his hourly amusement to predict some terrible calamity, which would involve his wife and children in irreparable ruin. To-day he would tell my mother that he had dreamed her boy had been attacked and murdered. To-morrow he would fix a time when she was destined to follow her daughter to the grave; and the next day, with an unmeaning look of mystery, he would tell her to beware of him in such a month, for he had an awful mission to perform, and must

fulfil it. Every new denouncement carried terror to my mother's breast; one after another burst like a bubble in the air, but the latest shook her fragile frame as powerfully as the first. This the inhuman man well knew, and knowing it, pursued the system, gloating at his success. I laughed at his prediction; but from that well-remembered evening he marked me for his victim. He could not suffer me in his sight, nor did he permit me to be out of it. The foulest epithets were associated with my name. Expressions which I had never heard, and whose signification I did not understand, and, on enquiry, learned only to become more ignorant and perplexed, were, without provocation, heaped upon me; oath after oath was fulminated on my head; and I have stood trembling and aghast, listening to my father, wondering why the lightning that destroyed the fruitful and the goodly tree, did not strike dead the *man* that mocked his Maker, sported with his holy name, and laughed to scorn his solemn precepts and commandments. Fresh trouble came upon my mother in consequence of the new direction of my father's hatred. Whilst she had been the only object of his violence and savage humour, the blows had fallen silently upon her, and the anguish they elicited had been borne without a murmur. You might read her history in the lines that sorrow, in spite of her, had traced upon her pallid face—and but for these, the patient martyr might have passed into her grave unsuspected of a pang. It was not so when her child was doomed to share her punishment. She saw me pining beneath the blight of an unnatural malignity. She beheld precocious hatred, impious passion, swelling my unripe cheek, staining my ill-instructed tongue; and nature constrained from the *mother* the wailings that had been overpowered and stifled in the wife. She wept, she remonstrated, she begged, she upbraided; but the new instrument of torture worked well, too well for the employed to surrender it so easily. Night after night passed in loud distracting brawls. It had become impossible to escape from persecution. Until now I had been spared the *sight* of his ferocious violence. I had heard all, but seen little. My mother took care to banish me from the scene of her misery; but not the less on that account did I pass the long and weary hours of the night at her chamber-door, shaking with fear, and expecting every moment to hear her dying accents. Never did I forsake my guard until stupefaction had wrought upon the intoxicated man, and all was silence in the house—all but the victim's heavy sighs, or it might be, her prayers, choked by her hot, heartrending tears. I had found it impossible to sleep until I could carry to my bed the assurance that murder had not been committed. I had made the attempt many times; but before my head was on the pillow, a slight noise, real or imaginary, brought me to my feet again, and sent me tremulous and apprehensive to their bedroom. For countless nights I stood before the door, a lone and wakeful sentinel. The early summer sun has found me on my watch; the winter's howling wind and dropping snow have been my long and cheerless visitants. I was glad of my privilege and grateful to enjoy it, whilst she was ignorant of my occupation. I do not think I could have borne the sight of half her sufferings. I endured to hear them, deeming my proximity a guarantee for her safety and defence. This advantage was soon denied me. He followed me whithersoever I went. He lighted a fire in my bedroom, quaffed his liquor there, and, between the draughts, railed and raged at me, until the same expressions, repeated and repeated, fretted the mind almost to madness. If I ran from him, he pursued me. If I stood still and silent, he goaded till I answered. If I spoke, he stormed and foamed until I held my peace. The persecution was intolerable. I sank beneath

it, and my poor mother, in her agony, looked around to find for her second-born a second place of refuge. In the meanwhile my father still performed the duties of his office. Flagrant as were his proceedings, they were not known to their full extent beyond his own house. Few persons in the straggling parish in which we were located, visited us. Whispers could not fail to be abroad, but they were indistinct, and the people were not curious. Besides, my father was a *generous* man—generous as the word is understood in the gross vocabulary of the world. Hodge, the ploughman, "had never seen the parson's equal. Wet or dry, if ever he met with Mr. Harrington, he was as friendly as could be, and nothing short of a quart had he ever offered him." There was not a labourer who had not profited by such questionable charity, and who was not ready, by day and by night, to do the clergyman good service. The innkeepers were satisfied that "the parish had got just the man it wanted, and that the Church would never be in danger whilst it had such clergymen for props;" and the most censorious in the parish could only say, "that Mr. Harrington was no enemy to his bottle, and was, in other respects, a very jolly parson." Now and then a tale would find its way from the parsonage into the village, but so strangely altered as to be no longer recognised by the subjects of it; and, at such times, my mother fared but poorly in the estimate of the parishioners. "She was to blame for answering my father; he was warm-tempered, but *very good at heart;* he had much to vex and worry him—a sullen daughter at home, and a wild scapegrace son exiled from the house. His wife should think of this, and not cross him when he was ill at ease." These were a few of the remarks appended to each story, as accident or my father's tongue—for he was cunning as well as vicious, and could find advantage in being the bearer of his own disgrace—carried it from our dwelling through the village. To all this, it must be added, that, although he was never actually sober, it could not be averred that he was always inebriated. During the earlier hours of the day he was thoroughly master of himself, and with his grave and serious aspect might have challenged your closest scrutiny. His constitution was naturally very strong, and his system did not yield without a struggle to the inroads of the poison. It had become necessary to his existence to gratify, in every hour of waking life, the morbid cravings of his appetite. With the earliest blush of day, a draught that would have been a dangerous stimulant to others, was swallowed to soothe and tranquillize his frame. Dram was added to dram with fearful frequency, but without any visible effect until late in the afternoon; but then he had already shut himself up from the world, and the horrors of drunkenness were exhibited only to those of whom he had no fear, and who had no power to resist or avoid the cruelty that eternally accompanied it. Remembering how a neglect of his former duties, or rather a profanation of them, had caused his removal from his first cure, he took pains to discharge to the very letter the obligations of his calling. He never absented himself from the pulpit; he never approached it helpless from intemperance. The task did not call for much self-denial. Service was *performed* but one day in the week, and but once on that day. For visiting his flock, the majority of his congregation were boon companions, and he was a welcome guest at all times. I have said enough to account for my mother's isolated, pitiable condition, to explain the cold neglect that she experienced, and to move you with compassion for her undeserved and cruel fate. She found neither help nor consolation in man. She had not asked it. She turned her thoughts and aspirations heavenward. *There* they were fixed henceforward—there they were occupied, securing a

resting-place for the bruised spirit that longed for its own bright, peaceful home.

Let me not forget to say, that, besides my mother and myself, there was another individual who had borne testimony to my father's mode of life. This was no other than his own clerk—old Adam, of whom you have heard me speak. He was upwards of seventy years of age when we first knew him—a rare old man, primitive in his habits, simple as a child. He was devoted to the Church of England, to his parish, to the parish church, and to the church's minister. He honoured and revered them all. They were the most important things of life—the only things—life itself. A flaw in any one came not within the circumference of his belief. They were infallible all. He had never travelled further than five miles beyond the vestry-door. Bible and prayer-book were his only library; the school and little children, his choicest occupation and best friends. I loved him dearly, and looked upon him as the wisest and the best of men. My father considered him an idiot and a fool, unworthy of notice, and did not hesitate to act before him precisely as if no one had been present. Old Adam was a spectator during one of his wildest fits, and believed that the last judgment was approaching, and the world hastening to its close. The scene was repeated, and the old man hobbled away, flustered and confounded. For a third time it was his lot to witness his superior's degradation; and he stood before him, unable to move and to speak, silently weeping. It was with good Adam that my mother made her last effort to attach to herself a friend and comforter. He passed much of his time in the little churchyard, keeping it in trim, good order, and busy with the trees and flowers which he had planted and tended for some years around and about the last dwelling-place of his ever-respected friends. He had a sincere regard for his mistress, and he pitied her distresses; but his veneration for the Church and her minister had been too great to allow one syllable of disrespect to escape him against the Reverend Mr. Harrington. So it was when we accosted him in his usual haunt, and my mother spoke to him in confidence respecting her wrongs.

"I have long ceased, Adam," she said, "to think for myself; but I cannot be insensible to my poor girl's sufferings. I owe it to her to take some steps for our release."

"Oh, madam," he replied, "think of Mother Church—think of the scandal and the shame! I wouldn't have matters known, to be made clerk of the cathedral itself. We should make wounds that we could never heal, if we were to preach for ever afterwards. People are so much more apt to find fault with what the clergyman does ill, than to follow what he says well. Folks who read little are very foolish; and if a cobbler is hanged for murder—as Anthony Potts was in the town yonder—they'll tell you that cobbling is a wicked trade, quite unnecessary, and ought to be abolished. So it is, madam, with a mender of souls. The cloth suffers more than the man."

"Am I not justified in an appeal to the world? Does not my child demand it?"

"I must own," said Adam, "Mr. Harrington *is* a little comical at times. But don't you think it is his way. He means nothing. Couldn't something be done mildly, so as to keep the unfortunate business snug and quiet?"

"Quiet, Adam? Do you imagine that it is not the common topic of the village?—that it is not known to every creature in the place?"

"I am sure it isn't, madam," he replied, "for I have taken too much thought of that myself. I have silenced all complaints. I am a member

of the Establishment, and Heaven forgive me if I have gone a little to the left in doing a member's duty! I have said all you could have wished me—even hinted—may I be pardoned for it—that he was delicate and weakly, and liable to attacks—that he drank very little for the stomach's sake, and, unfortunately, the least drop proved too much for him. I have said he was a man of troubles, and easily excited—and that the anxiety he felt for a rebel boy at school made him at times not conscious of his doings. The people have pitied him. You could not have shown more sorrow for him yourself than they have done—and only think what a load of reproach the Church has escaped, to say nothing of her ministering servants!"

"You have been merciful, Adam," sighed my mother.

"I have endeavoured not to mistake my duty, dear lady, and I trust I have done no more than that. It is hard for me to say 'bear without repining;' but if you will do so for the sake of the Church, whose child you are, verily you shall have your reward. It cannot last for ever. We have, all of us, our trials, and none may be perfectly happy here. 'Earthly trouble,' as the hymn beautifully says—

'Earthly trouble is the thong
To lash us all the saints among.'

Do not take Mr. Harrington's foible so much to heart. Let him have his way, and—might I venture without offence to say it?—do not answer him; leave him when he is angry, and let pretty Miss Emma go away too; for the sight of one child may, in his dark moments, remind him of another who does not deserve so well of him. Pardon me, madam, if I have said too much."

It was with simple Adam as with the rest. He did not in his heart, for he could not, as many did, look upon my mother as the source of all our wretchedness; but much, he believed, might have been avoided by a more prudent mode of treatment. Alas! it was a prudence that she would gladly have acquired—but where was she to learn it? Who could teach the lesson that was to save the lamb from the knife of the slayer?

Friendless abroad—pursued with untiring barbarity at home—impaired and wasted by bodily suffering and long anxiety on my account, God at length had mercy on his child, and took her to himself. Her illness was of short duration. She died. Be satisfied that I state the fact. The horrible scene is never to be recorded. It was a winter's morning—three o'clock had just struck. It was bitter cold. I had excluded my father violently from the chamber of death, in which the clammy clay-cold moisture of mortality was already rising. He struck at the door, stamped, stormed—called her a hundred hideous names—swore———I cannot proceed. The sacrifice was accomplished. The gasping sufferer gave me her last look—fonder and fonder it grew, as it retreated from the world—she pressed my hand, and whispered, "*He has killed me!*" The whisper was drowned in the ravings of the drunkard, who had yet to be conscious of his victory—yes, his victory—for my poor mother was a corpse.

Mr. Clayton had reached this point in the melancholy narrative, when a sharp knocking at our door startled us both. A man entered the room in haste, and out of breath, enquiring for Mr. Stukely. He had been sent from the infirmary. A patient, exceedingly ill, had requested to see me whilst he was still able to make himself understood. The messenger did not know the name of the individual, nor how he had become acquainted with my present abode. He had received his instructions from the hall

porter, and he thought he had heard that functionary say that the patient was an aged person; but of this he would not be quite sure. Puzzled and wondering, I turned to Mr. Clayton. There was no time for delay, and he recommended my immediate departure. Stopping the history of poor Emma for the present, I accordingly set off—and the messenger, wiping the heavy perspiration from his brow, followed immediately.

PART X.

THE HISTORY OF EMMA FITZJONES CONCLUDED.

Orlando.—"Oh, good old man! how well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty, not for need!
Thou art not for the fashion of these times,
Where none will sweat but for promotion;
And having that, do choke their service up
Even with the having; it is not so with thee.
Adam.—"Master, go on; and I will follow thee,
To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty."
As You Like It.

WHEN I reached the infirmary, a young man, standing at the street-door, looking pale and anxious, took off his hat and bowed respectfully. I recognized him as an old acquaintance; but a difficulty of remembering names, which I have experienced from childhood, and still suffer, prevented my addressing him by his title. I returned his salute, and walked on. He followed me up stairs; and when we had ascended the first flight, he touched me with an infirm hand softly upon the arm.

"You know me, sir—don't you?" said he.

"Yes, by sight, very well. What is your name?"

"I am Simmonds's grandson," he replied. "The old gentleman is dying up stairs, sir."

"What!" said I, "poor Simmonds of Cambridge?"

"Yes, sir," answered the man, whom I immediately knew again. "He's going, poor old man—very fast. How is he now, ma'am?" he enquired, turning upon a nurse who passed us at the moment. The latter made no answer, and proceeded on her way. "Oh, I am sure he is sinking!" he continued, bursting into tears and yelling aloud.

"Don't you be a fool there!" thundered a voice from an enormous hall-chair, which wanted only a few articles of furniture to render it a snug box, fit for the retirement of a beadle or a porter in the evening of his life. "Don't you be snivelling there, just by them wards! What do you think patients is made of?"

"How unfeeling they all are!" exclaimed the grandson. "Come this way, if you please." We mounted another staircase, and arrived at a large door. The young man was about to open it, when he stopped suddenly.

"It's no good," he said; "I can't go in. I don't know what's the

matter with me; but I have come so queer all over me, that I can't move a step."

"What are you alarmed about?" said I. "Is Simmonds in that room?"

"Yes, sir, and he is dying, I am sure. I can't bear to look at him. I never saw a man go in my life; and a man that's related to you, and that one knows—oh, dear me!" and the grandson roared and blubbered afresh.

"You are a coward," said I.

"No, I am not," he answered quickly. "I fought a man on *Parker's Piece* double my weight, and licked him too. This doesn't feel like being frightened. It's an awful feel. Did you ever see any one die, sir?"

"Tell me—how did Simmonds get here? Does he know of my coming?"

"Oh yes! he sent me after you, sir; but I didn't like to leave the place any more than I liked to stop in it—so I gave the boy threepence to run to your inn. By-the-bye, he owes me threepence; for I gave him sixpence, and asked him to get change."

"Who told him that I was in Huntingdon?"

"I did, sir. I was sitting at the window in the ward, by his bedside, when you and another gentleman went out at the street-door. I thought, somehow, it was you, and yet you looked older a good deal than when you was up at college. But when you began to walk, I was satisfied at once; for you know you always used to stoop and swing your arms, and so you did directly; and then I called out to grandfather that I was quite sure Mr. Stukely had just left the house. The bed-maker told me that you had just been to the matron, and then grandfather made me run to her to get your address; and when I had got it, he told me to fly to you as fast as I could, or he should be dead before I got back; and I really thought he would, so I sent the boy."

"How came he here? Is he very poor?"

"Oh, not at all poor! He has saved up a pretty sum of money, we all know; but he has been very stingy of late, and wouldn't spend a penny on himself. Soon after you left Cambridge, sir, he came over here, and has been leading a rum sort of random life ever since, going into one cheap lodging after another—and never stopping in one longer than a week at a time. He would never tell any of us what he wanted here. Father thought the old gentleman was demented; and so he sent me here to look after him, afeared that he should destroy his existence, or even make away with his money. I have been with him for the last two months, but he almost starved me to death; and I was thinking of going back, when this terrible illness came upon him. I wanted him to have the doctor at home, but he wouldn't think of it; for he said it would cost money—and he had none to spend. He made me apply for an admission-ticket to this place, and here he has been since Monday week."

"Tell him I have arrived," I said.

"Oh no! Go in at once—there's a good gentleman," replied the youth. "He is very anxious to see you. I thought he would have jumped out of bed with joy when I told him you had been in the house."

"But I may alarm him if I go in too suddenly."

"Oh no, no! I am sure you won't, sir—oh, pray, do go in!" he continued, shaking from head to foot with fear. "You'll find a nurse in the room. Perhaps I shall be better in a little time. I'll wait here, sir; and if you want me, call. Oh, dear me! It's the house, I think. There's

such a smell of sickness in it, that it makes your heart drop within you."

I opened the door without another word, and entered a ward filled on either side with beds, every one sustaining its own sick occupant. I walked along the room, and passed the beds in order. In the last I discovered the well-known countenance of my ancient friend—but how much altered! There lay, indeed, poor Simmonds—every month that had elapsed since our last meeting having fallen upon his aged head with the weight and power of a twelvemonth. He had arrived at the outer gate—the portals were opening, and Death waited to guide the paralysed old man gently into the lovely land beyond. It was no leap for him, to whom life had become already a load too heavy to be borne—an impediment, and no upholder of the spirit, matured and unimpaired, and riper than ever for its heavenly employment. There lay my good old friend—his hoary locks, scanty and long, shading, as with a delicate and silver veil, the eye that lacked its speculation; there, breathing hard and quickly, but quiet as a child that knows no sin—neither alive nor dead—he tarried for the word that should command him hence, and find him not unwilling to be gone. I hesitated for a time to break the slumber on which he seemed to move so smoothly homeward; and would not have committed the unrighteous act, had not the sleeper breathed my name, and given me reason to believe that my presence was still needed to bring perfect peace to him who had arrived so near to it. I answered him, and the dying man opened his eyes quickly, as the dreamer starts from his horrid brain-world into truth and reality. I called him by his name, and told him that his old friend Stukely was at his side.

"Poor lad—poor lad!" he gasped, and stopped for breath.

"Do you know me, Simmonds?" I enquired.

"Yes, yes!" he answered, staring into my face; "the boy told me you were here. How did you find me out?" It took him some time to say as much as this. He ceased a dozen times to recover breath, and he spoke in a whisper.

"Do not distress yourself, Simmonds," I said. "Give me your hand. I will talk to *you*."

"The screen, the screen!" he exclaimed, drawing from the coverings his dried up trembling hand, and pointing with a bony finger to the opposite side of the apartment.

"What of it?" I asked, noticing the moveable partition which he referred to.

"Bring it here. They'll let you. They put it before the man that died last night. It will be my turn soon. I want to speak to you. Why need they hear?"

I communicated his wish to the attending nurse, and his request was instantly complied with.

"And now, sit down," he said, "and tell me—is it true?"

"What?" I enquired.

"Are you ruined?" he whispered. "Have you nothing left in the world? Did they succeed?"

"I have had my full share of worldly trouble since we parted, Simmonds; but I cannot complain now."

"Where is your poor father?" he asked.

"In heaven, I trust, Simmonds."

"What!" he said, interrupting me. "His troubles killed him, then, at last? Ah, I thought they would! It was much for one man to bear."

"Did you know my father, then?" How—when did you see him?"

"When he came to look for his runaway," replied the old man, who gathered strength as he proceeded, possibly from the mental effort that the reminiscence occasioned, or it might be only from the physical excitement. "When he came for you, sir, time after time, waiting up two days this time, and three days the next, and then going back to London post-haste, to prop his falling house, or to bury his poor wife, who took to bed with her a broken heart—and never rose with it again. Poor gentleman!"

A fit of coughing checked the speaking man, and he motioned to me eagerly for the medicine that lay at his bedside. I gave it to him, and he said, murmuring to himself,

"Yes, that was the time!"

"He was grieved, Simmonds, not to find me—was he not?"

"Heart-broken, sir!—like his wife; but he was a man, and she a woman. A man may live with a broken heart, but a woman can't."

"Simmonds, I had a loving father, and I behaved most cruelly towards him."

"Where did he meet with you at last? We scoured the country for you, but could get no news at all. When he left me to go to London, he went first to Huntingdon. He told me he would write to me. He never did; but I knew that he lived in the city, and so I travelled by the coach to London. I had never been there before, and I was seventy-eight and more. I couldn't find him in the city, and so I came back; but I set out for Huntingdon again, and here I have been, looking for you and him, sir, ever since."

"How glad I am to meet you, Simmonds!"

"Yes; I heard two young doctor gentlemen yesterday, at the next bed, laughing at me to themselves, and saying they were sure the old man couldn't last the night out; but something inward-like kept telling me I shouldn't go till I had heard about you. Now I am satisfied, and I don't care how soon the Lord thinks fit to take me. My business is nearly settled here."

"Tell me, Simmonds—can I do anything to help you?"

"How did matters turn out, sir, with your father? You'll excuse my rudeness."

"As badly as they could. He died a ruined man!"

"And what, in heaven's name, are you doing, sir?"

"I believe I shall do well. I have suffered much, Simmonds, but my prospect brightens."

"Don't be angry with me, Mr. Stukely. I don't mean any harm—but if you would, sir——"

He hesitated.

"Speak on, old friend," I said. "I am not so vicious as I have been. You remind me that I have need of your forgiveness."

"You never wronged me, sir, in your life. I couldn't bear to see you led away. I have saved a little money, sir—it's very little—not above ninety pounds. You wouldn't, would you?—might I be so bold—I——"

The poor invalid grew flushed and nervous in the endeavour to express himself, and his voice thickened, and the medicine was once more had recourse to.

"Will you accept it, sir?" he said at length. "I have no further use for it. I mean no offence, but I was bold enough to put it by for you. It is hardly worth your having, but it may be useful. Your good father, sir, was very kind to me."

"I do not thank you the less, Simmonds, because at the present moment I have no need to take advantage of your kindness. I am not wholly unprovided for. Heaven has furnished me with a friend who will not easily desert me. Would that he were here now to witness your generous conduct!"

"But indeed, sir, the money is yours. When I heard it whispered in Cambridge that you were quite undone, I put it on one side; and I have got it here, sir, under my pillow, all in bank-notes—tacked in my waistcoat. Do take it!—I shall die the happier for it."

I thanked Simmonds for his kind intention, but firmly declined to accept his gift. Was there not one without who had a fair and legal claim upon the grandsire? Had he not established it by a perseverance and self-denial that had already threatened to give way, so difficult were they of endurance? In any extremity, I would not have disturbed the grandson's right. Now, I had not even the temptation to do him wrong. We spoke together of my college days, and Simmonds recounted to me many a touching passage in my father's short acquaintance with him, that carried to my heart the bitterest sorrow and self-reproach—both how vain and ineffectual! The enfeebled sufferer soon overtasked his strength. At first he paused, delayed, and stammered, then resumed without success, at length ceased from exhaustion! I placed his head upon the pillow, and held his hand in mine. He breathed with difficulty. Vain were fresh attempts at conversation. Life ebbed apace—his eye closed—he slept and breathed. I sat at his side for an hour. He remained in the same condition. The screen was removed, and air was permitted to flow with balmy softness over the patient's cheek. What could it now do more than fan the death-fire that was already kindled there? As I sat by him, the nurse advanced to me. "The poor old man," said she, "slept in that way all day yesterday. He may linger on for some hours yet. When he goes off, it will be as sudden as the snuff of a candle, and about as quietly." I gave the nurse my address, and told her that I would gladly remunerate a messenger who should bring to me before nightfall, an account of the patient's state. If he should rally and ask for me again, I hoped she would immediately recall me. She promised to do so, and I took my leave of her. At his place near the door, I found the grandson, eating with apparent enjoyment, and with much avidity, a mass of bread and cheese.

"Is he dead?" he asked immediately.

"He is not." I answered. "He sleeps. Go to his bedside, and watch him closely. You may lose him before you are aware of it."

"Oh I can't!" he cried out; "I couldn't go into that room again for all the world. Let alone grandfather, there's that fellow with the *hairysipperless* a bed or two off him. He's enough of himself to sicken a chap for a week. I can't go in, sir, I couldn't to save my life."

"This is very unbecoming," I replied. "You seem to have a great deal of feeling. It should teach you better things."

"It's no use talking, sir, he answered quickly and walking back a step or two. "I have got a fright upon me, and I can't conquer it. I have been overcome ever since the morning; and I could as soon walk into my grave alive as into that there horrid room."

"Very well," said I, "attend to me, then. I am afraid the sun has risen upon poor Simmonds for the last time."

"You think so—do you, sir?" roared the youth, interrupting me. "Oh, dear me! I guessed it—poor old man!—I guessed it!"

'Moderate your grief, and listen. Should he die to-night, you are his nearest friend. Look under his pillow."

"What!" he exclaimed, "afore he's buried? Oh, bless your heart!"

"When you please. But look in time—for there's a treasure which will be your own."

"Why, what do you mean, sir?" he enquired, his countenance displaying an awakened curiosity.

"Beneath his pillow," I continued, "he has placed his waistcoat. He sleeps upon it now, and there, sewed up in it, are ninety pounds. You will see the old man buried decently, of course. The rest of the money is yours, to convey to Cambridge to your father."

"What!" said he, "grandfather got ninety pounds there!—I thought the old man had been saving up. What! under his pillow, with all them thievish nurses running in and out! I am very much obliged to you indeed, sir—Oh, here's a chance I've run! Why, ten to one, they have grabbed it since you came away. I hadn't better lose a minute. If father knew it, he'd break my head in two."

He said no more. He bounded from me like a deer. His painful affection was forgotten. The loathed chamber and the grisly occupants no more thought of. Mammon had revealed himself in one bright corner. What foul irregularity and odiousness cannot he adjust and dignify, or render with a touch invisible! Alack for human nature! With the rapidity of light the grandson flew to the grandsire's bed. With the vehemence of natural love, I beheld him, as I quitted the place, smoothing softly and with care—that grandsire's pillow.

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when I was summoned for a second time to the infirmary. At four o'clock poor Simmonds had been pronounced *in articulo mortis*, and the attendant did not fail, according to my parting injunction, to make me acquainted with the fact. It was little that I could do in this extremity for the faithful gyp. The grandson sat at the foot of the bed, and held down his head for grief or shame. I told the nurse that the youth was furnished with the means of providing for his relative; and he made no answer. I concluded therefore that he had found his prize. Twenty-four hours afterwards Simmonds breathed his last; and a purer soul never winged its timorous way upward to the gates of heaven, doubtful of its right to enter there.

* * * * *

It was evening before Mr. Clayton resumed the narrative of the unfortunate Emma Harrington. I would gladly have postponed the task to a more fit and suitable season. For one day, I had seen and heard enough of human misery—for one day, I had had enough of chastisement; but I chose rather to indulge the wish than to express it. It was a sharp, cold evening, and we placed our chairs on either side of a cheerfully-burning fire. Candles were brought, and the hangings of the window closely drawn.

"Shall we proceed?" asked Mr. Clayton.

I answered in the affirmative; and he produced the manuscript, opened it, and read.

I recount my history, and you believe it is a fable. You marvel at the hideous picture, and deny it to be human. So did they all. You cannot conceive Man the monster. You are proud of Humanity, and cannot suffer the veil to be drawn, and the naked soul to stand in light. Stukely, I ask not men to take for granted this miserable tale. I carry my appeal to the bleeding heart of woman. There I found my claim to be believed. Dreadful as is my fate, think not that it stands alone in the domestic history of despotism. Tyranny is unbounded when its sphere of exercise is

circumscribed. Cruelty is unrestrained where no eye can watch its deadly strokes; and merciless it is, oh, rest assured, where its victims are the uncomplaining and the weak. A hundred and a thousand gentle sufferers shall bear witness to the faithful record of my mother's wrongs, and find in them the echo of their own uncredited and unheeded injuries. She died, *murdered* by my father. I speak calmly and without passion. I have no softer word to express the numberless acts of persecution beneath which she sickened, drooped, and fell,—I passed the bitter night of her decease with her, and about her bed. I was frantic. What was to be done? Whither should I go? I was dull, stupid, and confounded when I ceased to rave; and I stared at the dead body without a sigh or a tear, passionless and unconcerned, as the pale object before me. For days I had anticipated her death; but now that it had come, my senses were stunned. A tremendous blow had fallen—so tremendous, that the common emotions of Nature were superseded by a breathless tranquillity, supernatural and intense. I could not think, nor attempt to view my new position. And I felt no pain. The time for that had not arrived. The smart does not accompany always the first infliction of the wound. The shock precedes the pang by many an hour. There was a void at my heart —that I knew full well. The *aching, agonizing* sense of loneliness—*that* was yet to come. And my father too! the intoxicated maniac—he persisted in his violence and tumult; and remained hour after hour at our door, execrating the poor inanimate thing that had been carried from his clutch, and showering on my head a hundred fearful menaces. If he ceased for an instant, it was to renew the clamour with redoubled vehemence, and with still fiercer exclamations. I heeded him not. I neither called upon him to desist, nor vainly sought to appease him by informing him of his loss. Dreary, desolate, terrible night! Millions of happy souls were carried through thy hours in gentle and unruffled sleep. What had I done as yet to be condemned to watch thy lazy, dismal progress in that black chamber—at that most fearful season? But the night passed away—daylight had already gleamed—the angry man was silent. My guardian angel profited by the moment—took pity on me, and closed me in his arms. I slept. For an hour all was forgotten; and the sleeper whose eyes had shut in Paradise had not visions more glowing than my own. I awoke to be for one moment ignorant of my bereavement—unconscious of the scene that had been enacted not three hours before—fresh from a heavenly dream did I awake, oblivious of the past, quiet, peaceful, and happy. For one brief instant only did I stand on the bright eminence, and breathe the grateful atmosphere. Down was I dashed, and with one exertion of memory plunged into an abyss of misery—from which I rise now—only now, Stukely, when my grievous sins are purged, and pardon and felicity are secured.

The morning was already far advanced, and I knew not how to act. The servants had in all probability acquainted my father with the dissolution of his wife. I feared to approach him. I considered, and resolved to remain with the departed. The determination was scarcely formed before my father himself joined me in the apartment. He looked alarmed and agitated, and his hands shook with more than their usual trembling motion. He approached the bed, and removed the covering from the cold one's cheek. I chilled and sickened as he did so. I imagined that he sighed. Could it be possible? I looked up at him—and believed that I saw the dull eye suffused with tears. With my whole heart I hated him; but a gleam of sorrow and of pity passed across my spirit—and I forgot the natural cruelty of the man in commiserating the wretchedness of the

slave. I thought not of his unnatural persecution. I remembered only that he had been tempted and was lost. He replaced the sheet—walked to the door, and bade me follow him.

"Come, Emma," he said in a subdued voice, and with a tone that fell upon my ears strangely from his lips—"come to my room."

He departed, and I followed him. He closed the door of his library upon us, and told me to be seated. I trembled, and complied with his request. He sat down also, and pressed his face as tightly as he might against the palms of his quivering hands. He removed them. I was not mistaken—the stony heart was touched and softened——he wept.

"Where is your brother, Emma?" he asked.

I did not answer.

"Tell me," he continued—"where is your brother? I must know soon —better now."

I burst into tears.

"You will kill him—you will kill him!" I exclaimed in agony, remembering my mother's ceaseless anxiety and fear, and dreading now more than ever the interview that she herself would never have permitted. "Do not ask me; I must not say."

"This has been the cause of all," he said, in an offended tone. "Why this secrecy and under-handed system? *She* pursued it till she irritated and made me mad; and I have been driven to the wine when kindness would have lured me from it."

It was false. It was the self-convicted criminal bribing his conscience to be merciful. I did not dare to tell him so; but I did my mother justice, and rejected the excuse.

"Where does he live?" he asked again.

"Oh, I cannot tell you! I must not if I would."

"Very well!" he answered, rising from his chair, and walking quickly about the room. "Very well—let it be so."

I rose likewise to depart; but he prevented me.

"Stay," said he; "you shall go to him. It is not necessary that you should acquaint me with his place of residence. You shall go, Emma, and tell him what has happened. He must be present at the funeral. You can prepare him for that day—no one better. He is a violent boy, I know!"

"What!" I ejaculated. "Is he to come home, then?"

"Yes," replied my father. "And you will see him previously, and reason with him on the propriety of behaving well. We have had misery enough. He is a fiery and ungovernable youth. I never liked his eye. He never loved *me*. He was always an unnatural boy. You shall do it."

He moved nervously up and down the room, and spoke with excitement, quickly and by starts. It was not difficult to detect the feeling that was at work, and that compelled from his recreant heart every word that he addressed to me. *Fear* overthrew him—the fear of meeting face to face the child and champion of the unhappy wife. I had been deceived when I attributed to him the expression of a nobler emotion. I rejoiced at my discovery, and hoped that it might yet hinder an interview, the possibility of which I regarded with affright. But I was mistaken; my father dreaded to meet his son—still more he dreaded to confront him unprepared, and at any moment. Henceforward he must live in constant apprehension. Anything was better than this—and he resolved, therefore, to see him at once on the best terms he could command, rather than leave the meeting in uncertainty and environ it with peril. I was accordingly commissioned to bring him once more home. A sadder business it had

never been my lot to undertake; and gladly would I have declined it, if the fear of something sadder still did not haunt me night and day, and render the crisis the least of evils to endure. Before setting out, however, on the unpropitious journey, I succeeded in extracting one promise from my father. Without it, I had refused to execute his wishes—and this, and any other, he would have granted speedily to ensure compliance with his will. It was, that he would on no account, and whatever might be the temper of my brother, use angry terms or violence towards him—that he would receive him kindly—make no mention of his former conduct—and permit him, the very day succeeding my mother's funeral, to return to school, and to remain there until his future plan of life should be decided on.

"It was a wise arrangement," said my father, "and should be acted on."

The love of his miserable life, and the fear of losing it—the strongest passions of the tyrant-coward's heart—rendered him capable of every act that should give security to these. It was on the third day after my mother's decease that I left the parsonage for my brother's residence. My father gave me his company to the market-town, and his morbid anxiety hardly prevented him from taking his seat with me in the coach. Pleased would he have been to travel to the very school-gate, and to have waited there for the result of our conference. I had never walked with him in my life. The situation was a novel one, and no less novel than it appeared unnatural. My feelings were shocked; nature suffered a violation when he offered me his arm—and my heart expressed its shame when I accepted it, in the eloquent blood which it sent tingling to my cheek. Every joint in my frame, every limb and feature, revolted at the act. My knees shook—my feet crawled—and my face was turned towards the earth, as though abashed, and hopeless to find sympathy and recognition in the bright pure sky. To link my arm in that—oh, sickening effort, and impossible! One imperceptible touch, and I withdrew it again for ever. I was in the coach, and I watched him closely as he sat in the parlour of the inn before which the vehicle waited. He had already said Farewell, and wished me safely back again. He had already, for the twentieth time, reiterated his earnest wishes in respect of my brother; imploring me to soothe and pacify his boisterous and angry temperament, and to assure him of his father's readiness to forgive all previous transgression.

"It was my duty now," he added, "to give my brother good advice; and he and I would be the better for it."

Not content with these parting words, he remained in his seat for a few minutes, and then hurried to the coach again.

"Mind," said he whispering to me for the sake of privacy. "Mind, no word, on either side, of what has happened. He returns directly—and no unnecessary irritation. That's as we agreed."

I nodded to him in acquiescence, and he retired once more to the room. There he resumed his seat, but rose again restless and unsettled, and with eyes and lips moving unsteadily, as if distressed with anxious thought. Then the sudden and loud smacking of a whip startled and called him to the window—reminding him of the very few minutes that were permitted him to convey whatever he might deem necessary to impress upon my mind; and he held up his finger to fix my attention on all that he had previously said, and looked pleadingly into my face until I turned loathingly away. Another glance enabled me to view him seated at a table, with the ready companion of all his hours. The wine-bottle was before him; and his trembling hand conveyed glass after glass to his

lips, with fatal rapidity. At the end of a quarter of an hour, all our preparations were complete. The luggage was secured,—the ostlers and other men had retreated from the coach—and the driver was mounting his box. My father was again at my side. The men laughed as he approached me, heated as he had become with the drink, and wild in demeanour, and the coachman winked knowingly to the innkeeper, who stood at his own wide door. I blushed to the forehead. The wheels rattled on—for a minute my father kept pace with them—and, before he desisted, I was able to collect enough to fill me during my journey with alarm and wretchedness.

"Let the villain come," he exclaimed in the drunken burst of passion, "and try to murder me again!"

It was noon on the following day before I reached the sweet village in which my brother had passed so many years of his life. All was quiet and pensive in that happy valley; and I envied the ruddy and open countenances of its young inhabitants, whom the welcome sound of wheels had brought speedily about us. Many a smiling girl stood there, naked of foot, ill clad, worse fed, whose ripe affections no early blight had poisoned, whose days of lawful and unmingled joy had passed unharmed through every change of bud, of blossom, and of fruit. The face of one young child beamed with ingenuousness and beauty; she knew the house of Mr. Percival. I made her my conductress. It was a holiday at the school. The younger boys were in the play-ground, vociferating and labouring at their games. The senior scholars had been permitted to walk abroad, and were not expected home till evening. Amongst the latter was my brother. I was invited by Mrs. Percival to remain in the house until his return. But I hoped he would not be far from the school; and the longing that I had to see him more than half assured me that I should meet with him. I went accordingly, in search. A gardener was at work on the lawn. I stopped as I passed him, and enquired if he knew Frederick Harrington.

"Do you see that, mum?" said he, pointing to a jug of beer that was at his side.

"Why?" I asked.

"Well, do you see it, mum? 'Cause that's his'n. He is the only young gentleman in this here school as knows what eddication is, and as larns manners. Whenever Muster Pusseyval wants to enjoy hisself, and gi'es the young gentlemen a holiday, Muster Harrington could no more pass this here gate to go into the village without giving I a summut for luck, than I could swallow it without drinking his health. I'm a-going to make this here nessgay for him."

"What, for his sister?" I asked eagerly, believing for the moment that he had received some intimation of my coming, although I could not imagine how."

"Not exactly, mum; but a *very* near relation," and he winked coarsely as he spoke, and grinned unmeaningly.

"Tell me," I continued—"where can I find him? Which way does he walk?"

"P'rhaps, mum," answered the gardener, "you'll think I am romancing, but I mean neither more nor less than I am going to say. He's so very industrious, that, whenever he goes out for pleasure, he always follows the plough. Now, what can you make of that? Can you *transmit* that?"

I concluded the man was tipsy, and I walked on without further conversation.

He permitted me to reach the gate, and then he ran after me.

"If you really want Master Harrington," he said, addressing me, "I can tell you where he is; but you mustn't split, mum, to the governor. If you goes through the village, and turns down the lane at the end, you'll come in about two minutes to a public-house. That there's *The Plough*, and if you'll enquire for him there, why, there you'll find him. I shouldn't be noways disheartened to drink your health, mum, on the same occasion."

Drink again! Was the horrid word to ring for ever in my ears? Was there not one spot of earth free from the enslaving passion? The very sound was cloying. I gave the beggar the means he asked, and turned from him with disgust. But what had he said of my brother? Whither had he directed me to go? What could he mean by asking me to keep his occupation secret? What was that occupation? What, on such a fair invigorating day, could induce him to forsake the beauteous scene, in the midst of which I stood elevated and exulting, in spite of all my care and misery?—so powerful for good, so very bright was all I saw! What lure enticed him to the alehouse—that nursery of crime—that grave of all the home affections? I had no leisure for consideration. I was already in the lane, and the sign of the public-house was dangling from the low roof before my eyes. The gardener had surely mocked me, and I asked for my brother at the door of the unsightly hut, with no expectation of hearing news of him. But I was deceived. The coarse proprietor of the house surveyed me curiously, whispered to a clown who was busy within the bar, and then nodded familiarly, telling me that the gentleman would soon be with me. The lout mounted a staircase that conducted to an upper room, and in an instant afterwards I heard a loud laugh that I recognised for my brother's, notwithstanding the unusual and rough exuberance with which it was sent forth. Then did I remember, for the first time since I had quitted home, that he was as yet ignorant of our loss—that I had yet to impart it to him, and to depress his gaiety with the most melancholy news that had ever been conveyed to him. I endeavoured to summon courage for the task. Again I heard the wild and extravagant laughter, but this time in fellowship with other tones of merriment, that proceeded from another gladdened heart. What could my brother Frederick want here? In another minute he appeared at the top of the steps, followed by a youth of his own height, and apparently of his own age. That youth was James Temple. My brother was strangely altered. I had not seen him for eighteen months before, and he had become a man. The ingenuous and handsome countenance of which I had been so proud, had assumed an air that startled and confounded me. The open and generous expression which stamped on every feature the impress of a young, a glowing, and an honest heart, was gone; and recklessness, immodesty, licentiousness, and turbulence, were mingled and concentred in the face on which I looked with shame. He had risen from a game at cards, for he held a few in his hand when he quitted the room above. Perceiving me, he threw them instantly behind him, and a moment afterwards he was at my side. His friend retired, and we were alone.

"What has brought you, Emma?" he asked at once, quickly—his eyes glaring as he spoke. "It has happened, then—has it? He has killed her at last. Now, don't wait—don't go round about. Let me know the worst without words."

"She is dead," I answered.

"The monster!" he exclaimed, gnashing his teeth, and clenching his fist, reminding me of the violence of his childhood. "The villain! he shall answer for it. Now, tell me, Emma—did he use outrage? Disguise

and conceal nothing. The law shall follow him to the grave—if it could, follow him beyond it, and fix him in everlasting fires: by Heaven I wouldn't spare him the smallest pang! He shall feel it, or may I die this moment! I tell you again, Emma, attempt no hiding of his guilt. I shall discover everything; and, if it costs me my life, I'll have blood for blood."

"Oh, Frederick!" said I, interrupting him, and terrified at his passion; "you cannot know what you say—how dreadfully you talk! Your Bible never taught you this."

"My Bible!" he answered with a sneer that deformed his every feature, and rendered fiendish the face that nature modelled from an angel's. "Bah! cant and priestcraft! Talk of something else."

"I will talk of nothing else, Frederick," I returned, "until you have recovered your reason, and cease this blasphemy. We have no friend left us now but *Him*. Beware how you lose that friend—and draw down upon your head the vengeance of an insulted Heaven!"

"Heaven!" he replied, in no way softened by my appeal. "Heaven! What have you received in the way of good from heaven, that should teach you to be its warm defender? Don't you be ignorant and weak enough to be imposed upon by all you hear. Why has Heaven permitted my father to rob me of comfort, happiness, and peace of mind, since the hour that I was sensible of life, and capable of enjoyment? Why has Heaven permitted him to persecute my poor mother for months and years, until the persecution killed her? Why has Heaven not separated them before?—and in separating now, why has Heaven destroyed the innocent, and left the murderer to live and riot as he pleases? Don't turn away from me," continued he—"that's the way with all of you. Answer me—let me know what can be said to this. I'll listen to reason, and to nothing else. If Heaven has permitted all this, what is it better than hell—what is your God——"

"Frederick," I cried out, "I'll hear no more. I am too young to reason with you; but my soul revolts at what you say. I want no other argument to persuade me you are wrong. I will trust the rising indignation that spurns your reasoning with fear and shuddering, and cannot tamely bear the violation you would madly perpetrate. Tell me—who are your companions?—what are you doing in this house? You have been reading impious books. Something has warped your better judgment, and made shipwreck of your happiness."

"Do not talk dogmatically of things you do not understand," he said, sarcastically. "Who taught you to call books impious? Have you ever read them? Oh, to be sure, there's no purity in them—no purity in any book but that of which my father is the authorized interpreter—whose doctrines he has taught and studied for so many years, with such advantage to the world, and so much profit to himself! I wish you joy of my father's book, and I hope you are pleased with its delegated minister. Miserable humbug!"

I endeavoured for a little time to collect myself, and to get language to express the feelings which were battling in my bosom. I knew him to be wrong. I was satisfied that his reasoning was unsound, and that, in a moment, an experienced mind could have hurled him with confusion from his untenable position; but I was distressed, grievously shocked, and flurry prevented thought. I had nothing to say, and, grieved beyond expression to find him triumphing where discomfiture should have abashed and routed him, I could only weep, and weak as a woman, rely for eloquence in my tears. The cold and heartless lesson that he had learned,

had not robbed me of his natural affection. He took me to his arms, and sought to console me.

"Never mind these things, sister," said he, pressing my hand. "We will never speak of them again. We have nothing to do with them. Right or wrong, they can never make me love you the less. I must be everything to you now, Emma—brother, mother, and father; you may trust me. Tell me of our poor mother. Let me hear everything connected with her end—mind, Emma—everything. Why do you cry so?" he continued. "I could not help speaking as I did just now. I will not refer to the subject again. These abstract questions should not make us miserable."

"Oh, Frederick!" said I, "that man has much to answer for. You are to be commiserated. You have been thrown upon the world. You have never known the value of a mother's hourly communications. You have never listened to truth dropping into the ready heart from the lips of love, that give a sanctity even to holiest things. You would not think as you do had you been at home, and had that home been peaceful as it should have been. You have depended from childhood upon the purchased kindness of strangers. You have grown up as dear mother often said, not as she would have trained you, but as Providence allowed you. You will get older. You will meet with good and pious men, and you will be more grieved for this unhappy way of thinking than I am now. But what awaits our wretched father, who is the cause of all?"

"It may be as you say. To please you, I will think it may be. But tell me, Emma—how fared it with poor mother?"

Frederick received from me a circumstantial account of our home proceedings since he had last been with us. I had come to him with my heart full of accusations and reproaches against the author of all our woes; and to his ready sympathy, of which I was sure, I looked forward for my solace and alleviation. But the mood in which I had discovered him, and the principles by which I found him to be actuated, suggested another line of conduct, which the safety and happiness of us both rendered it incumbent upon me to pursue. There was no need to spur him on to vengeance—it required not a heart-rending recital of our history to inspire him with the desire of vindicating his departed mother's injuries. Those injuries he had brooded over until a spark, a word, had become just necessary to ignite the heated and long-cherished animosity. I found it difficult to mitigate the conduct of my father. From what point of view, indeed, did it admit of palliation? Still, against my very conviction, I was led on by the impetuosity of Frederick, until I beheld myself extenuating every fault of our common persecutor, seeking for excuses where the glaring and enormous guilt denied, even in the most forgiving, a hope of pardon for the offender. The more my brother spoke of revenge and retribution, the stronger did I plead for his intended victim—the warmer were my entreaties for forbearance, and oblivion of the past. I put in a favourable light all that had passed, since the death of our mother, between my father and myself. I told him of his sorrow when she had gone, and his earnest desire to see his too long absent son. I did not fail to add, that it was by his express wish that I had undertaken my present journey; and that, in spite of all that I had urged to the contrary, he had resolved to have him home without delay.

"Who knows, Frederick," said I, "but that the melancholy death of our poor mother may have struck terror and remorse into his soul, and have startled him from the path down which he madly plunged year after

year! Let us hope that he has awakened to a sense of his wickedness. We cannot mend what has happened. Ought we to prevent our happiness for the future? Everything depends upon our conduct during the next few days. Come home, as he proposes. Let it be on the day of the funeral—you will mark him well on that day. If his sorrow is sincere, his repentance genuine, neither of us can withhold our pardon to the sinner. It will be our duty then to provide for our future peace and quiet. Should he exhibit no true evidence of amendment—should he be the same ungovernable tyrant, you need not remain with him another day. He has promised to provide for you—until he does, you can still reside with Mr. Percival. If you love me, Frederick, and value my peace of mind, you will put an end to violence and tumult. I am worn out with them. Think not of heaping up the load of infamy and disgrace that has already buried our good name beneath its foul deformity; no good will come of that, to you, to him, to any of us. Level it, if you can, with the earth, and let its existence be forgotten amongst men."

I repeated my entreaties, and I subdued and cooled his heated temper. I received his faithful promise. He believed that I was right, and that it was useless to avenge what never could be repaired. He would not seek to do it. He would revisit home, as I had requested him, upon the day of the funeral. If his father was indeed as I had described him, he would be silent with respect to his former conduct, and no syllable from his lips should disturb the welcome and much-envied harmony. If it should be otherwise, he would absent himself at once, and await at school the determination of his parent with regard to his future prospects. With this understanding we separated—my brother returned to the school, I remained at the inn, from which the coach set out that evening that was to convey me to my home again.

Left to myself, I remembered that I had made no enquiry respecting the employment which had called him to the public-house. I had not spoken to him either of his companion, who had left him as he caught sight of me. I desired eagerly to be informed of these. In my heart I believed that no good had drawn him to the hut, and a corresponding sentiment was entertained in respect of his friend and associate. I had scarcely permitted myself to form the latter opinion, before a gentle knock at the door of the room in which I sat, introduced to my presence the very gentleman himself. He entered the apartment with a very modest demeanour, and bowed profoundly; then, somewhat confused, he enquired if he had the happiness of addressing Miss Emma Harrington? Colouring highly, I answered in the affirmative.

"I have considered it my duty, Miss Harrington," he proceeded, "to apologise for what must have appeared to you an unbecoming rudeness. Before you leave us, may I hope that I am forgiven?"

He spoke in a sweet voice, and unhesitatingly, as one used to talk—confidently and well. I did not understand him, and I blushed more deeply than ever.

"Do not think ill of me," he continued, because you found me where, in truth, my tastes would never have seduced me. Your brother has no doubt told you why and how I came there?" He stopped for my reply.

"Do you mean the inn, sir?" I asked in ignorance of his drift.

"Yes," he answered, with a faint smile. "Yes, Miss Harrington, if you will condescend to honour it by that title. He has told you—has he not?"

"No. We did not speak, sir, on the subject. Do you come from him

now? Have you brought a letter from him? Has he sent a message? He has not changed his mind, I hope?"

"Certainly not," was the reply. "Miss Harrington," continued Mr. Temple, "your brother is my dearest friend. I have known him for years; I love him as a brother."

The young man spoke with fervour, and my heart warmed towards him as he said the words.

"He is worthy, sir," said I, "of your affection. He has a noble heart. He *had*," I continued, checking myself, "and I pray to God it may continue so."

"Yes, Miss Harrington," continued the gentleman in a musing tone, "he *had;* and let us hope he has. I risk much on his account. Do not suppose that, for one in whom I took a common interest, I could perform so much. For him, and him alone, do I venture to such haunts as that in which Miss Harrington surprised us both this morning. If I retreated hastily, and quicker than good manners would permit, it was to spare an explanation that would have pained us all to hear."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said I, "I do not quite understand."

"It would be useless to disguise the fact," he said interrupting me. "Your brother has been in danger. He has been surrounded by companions who have led him into dissipation. He is safe now. I have never deserted him. I never will desert him. I have injured my own character by following him throughout his career of folly. I am satisfied to be spoken ill of, whilst I know that I have done my duty. Should you hear your brother's friend, James Temple, mentioned with disrespect, you will know the reason why."

I was still at a loss to gather the exact meaning of Mr. Temple's words. I begged him to be explicit.

"A few words, Miss Harrington," he returned, "will explain as much as you desire to hear. The whole is, in truth, very little; but I wish you to do me justice. Pardon me if I say that injustice never accompanied beauty so perfect as your own. Frederick has been tempted to the wine-cup and the gaming-table."

"You do not mean it!" I exclaimed, starting with affright, and dreading to hear more.

"He has been tempted, and withdrawn from them," he added, in a louder voice. "I have watched him daily and hourly. I have seen him gradually falling beneath the wiles of wicked and designing men. I have interfered to snatch him from the trap. I have succeeded, and am happy."

"Then, indeed, we owe you much, sir. We are grateful for the act."

"I am more than overpaid to hear it from your lips. Do you return to —— so soon?" he asked.

"Within an hour, sir," I answered. "You know my place of residence?"

"I am your brother's dearest friend. I know your melancholy history. Although far from you, I have ever had a lively interest in your welfare. Need I say that it is increased a hundred-fold by this delightful interview? Frederick and I have passed hours in bewailing your unhappy fate. Better days await you."

"Yes," I answered, "I do believe it."

"Nature," continued Mr. Temple, "is kind. If she wounds—she heals. We do not always suffer."

"God is kind," I answered, "and often kindest where he seems most cruel."

"True," said Mr. Temple. "Nature is but another word for the same idea; and something, too, more tangible."

"What is that?" I asked.

"Oh—closer to the senses—easier to conceive. We worship nature which we see—and this is true religion. How the heart overflows with adoration on a bright sunny day, on any spot of earth that is glowing with the variegated charms of the voluptuous goddess! How free and generous—how prodigal she is of all her gifts, giving alike to the rich and the poor, and preaching, with a voice as loud and expressive as her own thunders, the doctrine of a universal love!"

"But what is all this, sir, to the poor sufferer?" said I, stopping him. "Sunny days bring little warmth to the bare heart of the orphan."

Mr. Temple ventured to contest the point, and continued to panegyrise in the loftiest terms the principle which, he contended, existed, and governed throughout the whole visible world. It was a strange theory, and new to me. I could not realise it, nor adapt it to my own preconceived notions of the Everlasting Deity. Of the latter, in the affairs of this world, he seemed to take no account. He ended and began with *Nature*. All things were wrought by and through her, and we had only to submit to and obey her laws. There was a mystery about all he said; but he spoke with eloquence, and with a fervour that animated his countenance, and gave brilliancy to an eye that shone with the fire and impetuosity of unsophisticated youth. I was struck and pleased with his earnestness; and oh, how much did I regard him for his kindness towards my unfriended and neglected brother! It is very true, that here and there, in the vehemence of his argument, I was startled and unsettled by propositions which my native sense of truth at once rejected as unsound and perilous; but his expression of the heresy did not give rise to anger, nor permit me to think unfavourably of the speaker. I could not, at that distance from the moving springs that worked within his crafty and inhuman heart, discover the motive and design of every word that fell, poisonous and sweet, upon my ears. What if his theory were dangerous and false, I believed his soul was pure, and flattered my imagination with the thought that I could see it beaming in his face. Hence, although he enforced the doctrine of personal unrestraint, and argued that the indulgence of what are deemed unlawful wishes, is sinful only when unnatural, and in opposition to the benevolent laws of nature; and, further than this, pursued the theme, and drew the ready inference, that all are justified who obey the dictates of the passions; I did not express my indignation at the insidious and demoniac lore, and strike the tempter dumb upon the very threshold of his scheme. I have but feebly pourtrayed my first interview with the destroyer. I do not hope to convey to you the full impression of that short conference. I do not desire it. I have dwelt through many a weary hour upon this introduction into misery and guilt—for such it proved to be—and I have found, the deeper I have pierced, the carefully strewed seed of all the after-growth of crime. I ask you to explain the reason why the unprotected and the orphan are the chosen victims of your fellow-men? Why are they so greedily pursued, so cruelly deprived of that small share of happiness that belongs to their condition? James Temple knew me to be the most unfortunate of my sex, the most deserving of his pity and respect. He saw me for a moment, and resolved upon my ruin. His first well-calculated step I have faintly described. For a season the second was delayed.

The morning for my mother's funeral arrived. Stukely, my pen falters, and refuses to trace the narrative which it sickens me to recall. And yet

it must be told. I have brought you to the climax of human wretchedness. Read and believe. I tell you that the strange tale is true—horrible it may be, it is—and yet I have survived it. Who doubts its authenticity? Let him carry it to the drunkard's habitation, and call around him first the miserable wife, and then the sobbing children, and let him astound their ears with the history that is their own. Oh! think not for an instant that exaggeration deforms the unsightly picture. The ugliness surpasses not the truth. Would that both could strike the conscience of one domestic murderer with effectual sorrow and remorse! The morning of the funeral had come. Ten o'clock had struck, and my brother had not yet appeared. He had arrived from the school late on the preceding evening, and had retired immediately to rest. I had received him, for my father had gone to his bed some hours before. I told him that our breakfast hour was nine o'clock, and he promised to meet his father at the breakfast table. I did not sleep that night. How could I? I walked restlessly about my room, longing for the morning to come, dreading its approach, and growing more and more anxious and alarmed as the clock warned me at intervals of its advance. At six o'clock I rose. Another sleeper in the house had been disturbed before me, and was already moving. This was my father. I found him in his library. He looked pale and wearied, and his usual tremor unhinged his whole frame. When I opened the door of the apartment he started from his seat, and was frightened.

"Ah—yes," said he, recovering himself, "it is you: be seated, Emma. He has come, of course?"

"He has," I answered.

"Well—and he is well-disposed, is tranquil, as he should be on the sad occasion?"

"He has said little," I replied. "He has not yet risen. It was late last night when he reached home."

"Well, I shall see him soon. Does he return to-morrow?"

"It is his intention."

"Good. He will be soon provided for. I have obtained for him an appointment in India. Tell him so. It is better that he should pass the little time that he will remain in England away from home. It may save a breach. I cannot brook contradiction. I do not wish to gall and irritate him. He is overhasty, I have heard. But he seems peaceable, and disposed to keep so, I think you said?"

Early as it was, the wine bottle was already on the table.

"Father," said I, pointing to it, "what is that?"

"Not another drop!" he exclaimed impressively; "not a sip, as I am a living man! I should have shaken to pieces had I not appeased the nerves with *one* draught. But I have swallowed it, and I am quiet. I shall taste no more: take it away." At the very moment that he made this request, and as I approached the table to comply with it, he raised the decanter mechanically, and poured from its contents another glassful. Without a word or a sign, and as if unconscious of the act, he drank it off. To such an extent was he the slave of habit, that I am satisfied he was ignorant of having transgressed the rule which he had laid down for himself the very second before.

"Father," I exclaimed, "for Heaven's sake be cautious! Who shall answer for the effects of a single dram? Cease to be master of yourself, and I forsee the consequences. As sure as I am speaking, there will be mischief that never can be forgotten or repaired. Be warned in time, and avoid to-night the furious insensibility, from which you will wake to-morrow to imprecate yourself, and loathe the very light in which you walk.

For your own sake be advised, and flee, for this one day at least, from the horrible temptation."

"Oh, trust me!" answered my father, made uneasy by the terms in which I had ventured to address him, "trust me—I will be wise. Here—take the key of the cellar. Let one bottle of wine remain for dinner. Produce no more. If I ask for more, refuse it. You have me in your keeping. It is for you to prevent the mischief that you dread."

I secured the key with eagerness, and, taking him at his word, placed beyond his reach every means of gratifying the insatiable lust. Breakfast was announced, and Frederick still was absent. I could not eat. Food had never been acceptable to my father so early in the day. We sat in silence, and the cloth was removed untouched by either of us. Shortly afterwards, a rustling and a moving about were heard directly overhead, and subdued talking on the stairs. A chill shot through me. The men had come to prepare the body for its last short journey. I wept, and my father sat over the fire, looking into it, and thinking, it may be, on the eternity into which he had hurried the uncomplaining sufferer. What an eternity for him!—I left his presence, and stole to the busiest chamber in the house, desirous of another leave-taking. The coffin was already closed. One person only was in the room, and that was poor Frederick, weeping at the coffin's foot, with the uncontrollable fulness of a heart-broken child. I walked to his side, and placed my hand in his. He closed me in his arms, and we had not a word to say, until the heart had wrung its last tear through his drowned and quivering eye.

"Did I not," he said at length,—"tell me, Emma—did I not obey her?"

"You did," I answered. "You never disobeyed her."

"But did I not offer a hundred times to come to her rescue? Did she not forbid it?"

"You have done your duty, Frederick. She was satisfied you had."

"If I thought otherwise, I could not live another hour. I am sure she was wrong; but I do not reproach myself for a strict compliance with her wishes."

"She is in heaven," I rejoined, "and smiles upon you for your filial love."

"Where is *he?*" he asked, turning from the subject. "I have not met him yet."

"He has expected you for the last hour or two. Come to him. He desires to see you."

"No—not at present. I shall wait here until the ceremony compels me to endure his sight. We are better and safer asunder. We will follow her to the grave in company. That is all he can require of me. I am happier alone. I could not talk with him."

"You will do nothing harsh and cruel, will you?" I asked, imploringly.

"No good can come of it. I will not give you pain unnecessarily, dear Emma. Death is no punishment to such a man. Torture for years, such as he inflicted, he deserves. It cannot bring her to life again. Would that it might!"

I had many things to do on this eventful morning, and I was obliged to leave my brother sooner than I wished. My anxiety prompted me to be continually at his side; for, in spite of his assurances, I had little confidence in his power of forbearance. I knew that an angry word or look could overthrow a mountain of good resolutions, and render him as helpless as an infant in the hold, and at the mercy, of his excited and unfastened passions. I was aware, too, from many observations that had fallen from

him, that his code of morality was lax, and justified to his mind acts that were criminal in themselves, and in the judgment of the world. His religious views had become fearfully dimmed, and he needed only the stimulus and the opportunity to become the sport and prey of notions that lead only to destruction. On these accounts, I trembled for him, and begrudged every moment that I passed away from him. Ill fortified he was to be alone in any place. Here, where he walked in the midst of danger and evil solicitation, he needed a hand ever present to guide him, and to warn him of the mine that one inconsiderate step would set thundering beneath his very feet.

At eleven o'clock, the small procession that constituted the ceremony of my mother's humble funeral was marshalled, and ready to proceed. My father and I were in the library, and waited for my brother. I heard his footstep on the stairs, and my heart beat painfully and quick. He descended slowly, and did not appear to delay or pause. In another moment he entered. I looked at my father, and he winced under the hard trial. He looked uneasily about him—cast his eyes upon the ground—towards me—to the attendants—anywhere but there, where fear, shame, and acute vexation, all commingled, rendered one object intolerable to the sight. Frederick was very pale; but he looked subdued and placid. Perfectly collected, and in a distant manner, he bowed to his father, and the latter returned his greeting with a silent recognition, that betrayed at once the agitation of his mind, and the small ability that he possessed to check and hide the gnawing agony that seared his sinful soul. There was no warmer salutation. Not a word was spoken. The silence of death prevailed in the room, far more crushing, because inconsonant with the occasion, until my father was reminded that it was time to go forward. I saw them depart—I marked them when they followed, side by side, the remains of the deceased through the long avenue that led to the churchyard. Still not a word was exchanged. A handkerchief was in the hand of my father—the mourner's ensign! Frederick was overcome, and wept aloud and violently; his sobs and moans were carried through the air, and conveyed to my own distressed and heaving heart. I closed the casement, and escaped them.

It takes but a little time to separate for ever the living from the dead, to place the latter in the cold, cold earth, and to render them as though they had never been. The last office was performed, and father and son were once more in the house together. I know not what had passed between them during their short absence. Certain it is they had spoken. The partition that had previously separated them was broken down, and communication, if not of the most friendly character, was, at least, unreserved. In spite of the evident attempts made by my father to appear at ease, awkwardness and anxiety were manifest in every word and movement. Once having addressed Frederick, he could not remain for an instant silent, but turned from one subject of discourse to another, regardless of connexion or relation, as if silence were impossible to bear, and the least repose brought with it peril and alarm. Frederick, on his part, was taken by surprise, and by degrees regarded his parent with a kindlier spirit than I had ventured to expect from the impassioned boy. He listened to his father's questionings, and answered with respect. A ray of joy stole across my heart, and, for the moment, I flattered myself with years of unmolested happiness—of harmony and peace. Not a word was said of the sad occasion that brought us again together. That was studiously avoided. But Frederick's future prospects were spoken of, and the nature of his employment explained to him. He seemed pleased

with the pursuit, and eager for active, profitable life. Notwithstanding, however, the favourable aspect which matters had assumed; notwithstanding the bright gleam that passed through our home, lighting it up with unaccustomed lustre, I did not lose my timidity, nor wholly rely upon the sudden and violent reaction. I lingered near father and son, and, as though filled with the presentiment of what was too soon to happen, could not for any interval lose sight of them without anxiety, and an oppressive dread of danger.

The dinner hour arrived. We had no visitors. My father, Frederick, and myself sat down to the meal, and the previous conversation gave place to heaviness and ungraceful silence. The solitary decanter of wine was on the table. My father drank from it sparingly, but Frederick emptied it with greediness. It was melancholy to behold the family sin taking possession of his soul so early in life; and I would gladly have persuaded myself that a desire to drown present grief, and no habitual vice, displayed itself in the eagerness with which he quaffed, glass after glass, the fatal liquor. Before the close of dinner, the bottle needed replenishing. My father looked at me enquiringly, but I did not heed him; for at the same time my eye was on my brother, and a glance enabled me to ascertain the heated and perilous condition towards which he was rapidly advancing. I took no notice of the hint. The repast was finished, and without a syllable I left the table. Against my own conviction I forsook my guardianship, and only to avoid a greater evil. For two hours I remained in my own room. I would not have quitted it again that evening, had not the never-absent and tormenting anxiousness that accompanied every hour of my brother's sojourn with us, driven me back again to observe the progress of the new-made reconciliation. I tripped confidently to the dining-room, opened the door, and was staggered, bewildered, and confounded by the view that I encountered there. Could I trust what my eyes presented to my waking mind? Or did I dream? Had I lost my recollection, my reason, in the conflict that my brain had undergone? The first object that I perceived upon the table was *a key!* the *duplicate* of that which I possessed—the conductor to the wine-cellar. Wine of different kinds crowded the board, some in bottles, unopened; some in the like half emptied, and next to them vessels drained of their last drop. My father was transformed already into the wretched object that wine had ever rendered him. He had become sottish mad, and ignorant of his acts—his words—his thoughts. Frederick himself had partaken of the fearful beverage until excitement glared in every feature of his disordered countenance, and his veins swelled with the hot and bounding blood that passed along them. It was an awful season. One inconsiderate word from either—one exclamation—one dangerous half whisper might be destruction to both. Careless children were they at the mountain's edge, unconscious of danger, and ready to take the step that dashes them to pieces. Who should have courage to venture near, and drag them backward from the yawning breach? Who would risk life now for the chance of sparing it? Oh, such a one was needed here to speak the word that might appease and save the helpless men who had ventured to the very brink of ruin! In my father's face I could not trace mischief. Was it possible that fear had still controlling power, and still protected him when every other feeling had given way beneath the maddening drink? Would for his own sake that it might be so! Yes, drunken anility and not ferocity seemed to be the prevailing humour. How long it would endure depended on his companion and antagonist. Frederick had grown loquacious, his voice was thick, and it

grew hoarse with exercise. There was spleen in every word he uttered, and anger, contempt, and bitterness. Ferocity, too, sparkled in his expressive eye, and corrupted every other feature. How he sat there, playing and trifling with his trembling prey, conscious of his power, and sharpening his appetite for mischief with the contemplation of his sacrifice! Neither of the men was disturbed at my approach. Each was too busy with his own peculiar thoughts. The chair of Frederick was drawn close to that of his father—his hand was upon his father's arm—his bloodshot eye was strained towards his father's sottish face. I remained at the door, fixed to the position in which my entrance had first placed me, and fearful of accelerating harm and evil by the progress of an inch.

"Tell me what you preach!" exclaimed Frederick, laughing aloud and unmeaningly; "which side of the question do you espouse? They tell me you are a—what is it? a Calvinist. Who is he? Did he love wine—did he drink as jollily as we do? Oh, you are a rare old sinner! ha, ha, ha!" and he laughed on, and swallowed a glassful in the midst of it.

"Do not talk so wildly," said his father, endeavouring to escape from his side.

"And why not?" answered Frederick, rudely stopping him. "Who are you, to order, and to say how a man is to speak or behave?"

"I do not wish to molest."

"No, I'll take devilish good care you sha'n't," said my brother, interrupting him. "I say, parson, haven't you broken your heart in fretting after your son? Hasn't natural affection almost killed you? Why, what did you think had become of me? Do you believe, in that black heart of yours, that you are really on the road to heaven? Come, no flinching! Answer me like a man. Here, take your glass, I'll drink to our better acquaintance. We shall know one another better for the future."

My father writhed under his infliction. He had a character to sustain which he had never studied—for which he was but ill prepared. He burned to burst the chains by which he felt himself enthralled. The dread of consequences kept him as submissive as a beaten slave. Mine was the cruel lot to observe in silence and in horror. A bumper was quaffed in honour of the taunting toast, and Frederick was again pursuing his doomed victim.

"Look there," said he, pointing to me; "that's your daughter. I am told that you have behaved most lovingly to her. Look at her, man," he continued, seizing him by the wrist, "and see what a colour your kindness has brought upon her cheek. Look—she is paler than the lily, and that we know is joy's own colour. You'll go to heaven for that, too. Why, you are a noble fellow to preach and pray, and tell us what we ought to do! Look me in the face!"

My father shook with rising passion, and he bit his lips, and drew his breath with difficulty.

"Look me in the face," continued the infuriated Frederick, for he had lashed himself to rage—"and let me see a pious monster—a religious fiend—a holy devil! Now, hear me. I have spent many an hour of my most miserable life—made miserable by you, in longing for this moment. I have looked forward to this interview till I have almost gone mad in waiting for it. I have walked for half a night listening to the wind screaming amongst trees, howling about tombstones, and over green graves, trying to keep down the horrible temptation that I have felt for years, to be your murderer. Hear, and understand me, I repeat it calmly—*to be your murderer*. I have seen the blooming and the young, without a crime, without the burden of a fault, cut down in beauty, and removed from the earth

which they were just beginning to adorn and dignify—and *I knew you*—the tormentor of your kind, the vilest of your race, in whose atmosphere to live was to breathe pollution, and to suffer death—I knew you to be alive, glorying in your defilement, pouring sorrow, distress, and misery on all who came within your reach, and rendering life a curse to all who had connexion with you. Do you think, I ask you, that I could deem it wrong to remove for ever from the world the source of endless woe? One blow could do it. One blow, and in an instant there was peace for the most deserving. I could have struck you down, I could have dealt the blow without remorse—without one aching thought. Why, then, came I not to give it? I will not tell you,—but there was good reason for my absence. You were preserved not through my forbearance. The cause that interfered between me and my strong desire exists no longer. Now, I am free to act. Now, I am here; and, monster, what prevents the accomplishment of what I have wished so long?"

"You dare not do it!" cried my father, starting from his chair, and eluding by the suddenness the griping hand of Frederick.

"You lie!" impiously replied the drunken boy, and following him as he proceeded from his seat.

It was my time to act. No longer capable of self-control, I placed myself between the angry men, and entreated the aggressor to desist. My influence and power over the unfortunate were gone.

"Stay you there," said he, placing me at a distance from them, "or begone, and do not intermeddle. I am tranquil, and am master of myself. We have a long account to settle; and it must be called over item after item."

"I do not fear you," muttered my father, gnashing his teeth, and looking fiercely at his son. "I do not fear you, most unnatural villain!"

"Well said, unnatural father!" cried Frederick, in a laughing tone; "then sit you down, and we'll converse. You need not fear me. You say I dare not punish you for all your guilt; and I say, *You lie.* I *dare;* BUT I WILL NOT. The time is past. You have not me to thank for it. Live, die and be detested, when and where you please."

The words were grateful in my father's ear, hideous as they fell on mine. He lost dastard timidity with their utterance, and acquired insolence and bluster. Secure of life, he had no motive to withhold his abuse, and it spirted out, as usual, upon the head of the powerless and innocent. He aimed his shafts at the coffin of my scarcely buried mother. Alas! he knew not the holiness with which that mother's memory was enshrined, even in the heart of the irreligious and much-offending Frederick.

"You have had a good instructress!" was the ready sarcasm. "Your mother——"

"Name her not!" shrieked Frederick; the blood rushing from his cheek at the same moment, leaving it pale, ghastly, and fearful to behold. "Name her not. I dare not name her. I dare not trust myself to listen to the sound."

"She was punished for the usage I received from her, and so will you be, and so will she," continued he, pointing spitefully at me. "You will be smitten both, as she was smitten, when I cursed her for her cruelty—vilest of wretches as she was."

"Be warned!" cried Frederick, swelling with anger, and struggling for composure, which he could not find. "Be warned, I say! Speak to him, Emma—save us both!"

"Warned! warned!" said the roused lunatic, presuming on the assurance he had received. "Who threatens me? Do you remind me of the past? I have not forgotten it. The curse will wither the hand that was

uplifted against your father, as it has visited and destroyed her who bore the miscreant, and taught him lessons that will avail him when he pines in hell. She was born to be my plague; and I glory in my deliverance. Were she here again, again would I be quit of her. I hated and despised her. I have lived to trample on her grave!"

He said more than this—more than I desire to remember or record. He persisted in the same strain, associating the most disgusting epithets with my mother's name, and outrunning sense in his eagerness to vilify her. Drunken, unmeaning gibberish supplied him with terms that would have excited ridicule and compassion within the breast of any one but him who listened to the speaker, enraged and irritated until reason was immersed, and could no longer serve him. One horrible expression, too infamous to be repeated, was fatal to them both. It was but half uttered before Frederick leaped from his seat, and seized his fellow-drunkard and his father by the throat. The latter fell, and his assailant with him. One shrieked with terror, and struggled furiously, the other foamed, and held the prostrate man down with a hand of iron. I saw no more, but ran from the apartment, screaming aloud for help, and about to fall with fright and agitation.

The servants had asked permission to leave home at the close of dinner, in order to visit the grave of their mistress, before it should be finally and for ever shut. It was a request that had its origin in affection, and I complied with it at once. They had been faithful and true friends—for years had shared the affliction of my mother; and on her account had borne anger and submitted to reproach. We were about to lose them now. Ingots of gold would not have purchased their services for my widowed father. They had already set out on their errand of love, and the house was deserted. No one there could help me, and I flew into the village. Within a hundred yards of the parsonage I encountered old Adam. He was the family confident, and in a few words I made the miserable business known to him. The poor fellow quickened, as well as he might, his aged feet, and, full of useless regrets and ineffective guesses, accompanied me to our abode.

"Oh, miss," said he, "why did the young gentleman return? What a pity he didn't keep at school! Oh, it was the maddest trick that could be played—just running into danger. Dear me, dear me, how thoughtless we all are! You don't mean to say, miss, that you left them on the ground, and fighting too! Your brother could never be so sacrilegious as to strike a man in orders! If he was wicked enough to insult his father, he must respect the cloth. Dear me, dear me! pardon me, Miss Harrington, yours is a remarkably unpleasant family."

We reached the house in time to meet Frederick rushing from it vehemently. He had a wild and vacant look, and he was paler than ever. Old Adam retreated a step or two as the wretched youth approached him. Frederick took no notice of him, but seized my hand, which was steadier than his own, and spoke to me, panting for breath.

"You are a witness, Emma," he exclaimed, "I implored him to be quiet. You heard me. He would not. He has himself to thank for it. Oh, the accursed drink! It is the ruin of us all. I vowed that I would use no violence—that I would not be angry, I promised you faithfully; for your sake it was right. The wine betrayed me—set me in flames. Oh, Emma, Emma!" he cried out, bursting into tears, "what is to become of you? What is to be done? All gone—all gone!" I endeavoured to pacify him. "No, no," he cried, putting me gently from him; "you mustn't kiss me now. Enter there—there—in that room, don't curse your

brother, Emma. I will spare you one trial—you shall not see me on the gallows! Good-bye—poor girl—I did not mean it, Emma. It was the drink—the drink!"

We did not permit him to proceed. Horrified by his words, I started from him. Adam had already preceded me, and we entered the dining-room at one and the same moment. *He was a corpse.* There, on the floor where I had left him, he lay a motionless clod.

Stukely, receive the command of a dying woman, and hold it sacred. Do not shun and utterly discard the drunkard of your acquaintance. Have pity on him, and shock his ear with the unparalleled but faithful history of his fellow mortal. The sight stupified me; I hurried from it, and went to join the—assassin! He was gone. He had fled—whither? Ah, whither could he flee, friendless in the world and alone? I returned to the house. Adam met me on the threshold. His eyes were full of tears. He took me by the hand—closed the door, and locked it. He was very much alarmed, but he tried to keep calm.

"Miss Harrington," said he, "may God forgive me for what I am about to do! The servants, you say, are out?"

"They are."

"How long will they be absent?"

"I cannot tell you, Adam. They may be returning now."

"We have no time to lose, then. You must not speak of this. Oh! we are doing wrong, Miss Harrington; but I am a weak old man, and hardly know indeed the right from the wrong. I pity you. Don't betray your brother. Don't let your lips sentence him to death. I have looked well about him. There's not a mark. Every one knew your father's ailment. A sudden death will not surprise the world. It has been long expected. It is a dreadful situation to be placed in, but what are we to do? Do you understand me, miss? Hark—there's some one walking up the avenue. Fly! fly! unlock the door; and oh, do not let them hear you for the world!"

I ran with speed. The domestics had come home. I joined them on the lawn, and, reckless of all consequences, I spoke the falsehood. In less than an hour it was spread through the whole village. The parsonage was thronged with applicants and visitors. Adam was with me for my support. Not one presumed to doubt the tale. It corresponded with the universal expectation. Many wondered why it had not happened many years before. Some had remarked, during the day, the curious look that the parson carried with him, and had all but said he wouldn't see the night out. An inquest was held upon the body. I kept my room that day. The coroner would not distress the lady's feelings by requesting her to be present at the inquisition. The jury concurred in the propriety of this forbearance; "for indeed," the foreman said, on behalf of all the rest, "the melancholy case was but too clear." So deemed the coroner, and so the world. The verdict was returned, and registered, and declared most wise by every one—Mr. Harrington HAD DIED *of apoplexy.*

The obituary announced my father's death. I could trace the hand of Adam in the composition of the precious memorandum. Thus it ran:—"*Died on Wednesday last,* SUDDENLY OF APOPLEXY, AND UNIVERSALLY RESPECTED (!), *the Reverend Arthur Harrington, rector of ——, in Kent.*" In a few days the circumstance of the minister's death was forgotten—he was no more thought of. The young proprietor was about to be ordained, and to return to his cure. The parishioners looked forward to his arrival. The affairs of my father were wound up.

It was no difficult matter. He had left behind him little more than was enough to purchase his interment. The whole of his handsome fortune had been dissipated, squandered, and lost, in the encouragement of his fatal passion, and in the blind recklessness which it had engendered and supported. He had mortgaged, borrowed, and sold, until his income could scarcely meet the claims which were in existence against him. His very furniture had become the property of another; and for the last three years of his life, the generosity and good feeling of a creditor alone permitted him to enjoy the use of it. I was left in the world literally penniless. A few jewels of my mother, of inconsiderable value, and my own clothes, were everything that I possessed. With these I quitted the parsonage, and, for the emergency, retreated to the cottage of an humble but kind-hearted woman in the village. She was now my truest friend. Indeed, I had no other in the world. My sudden extreme poverty had made manifest a hundred faults that were not visible before, and every virtuous eye was glad to look another way, and not be wounded with the sight of them. I resolved to go to service, the last resource of the outcast daughters of the improvident. My education had not been of a high order; still, I had not been wholly neglected. My mother had been for years my teacher, and I profited under her patience and instruction. I would endeavour to find employment as a governess; but, failing this, pride should not prevent me from becoming a servant-maid. I needed peace and freedom from my own thoughts. These secured, it mattered little how and whence they were obtained. I had arranged to go to London, that great mart and centre of industry, and it wanted but a day to the period fixed for my departure. My kind hostess gave me a volume of advice, and prepared me for the great struggle into which I was about to cast myself; pointed out the dangers of my condition, and laid down rules of conduct which it was indispensable for me to follow if I hoped for comfort and success. It was on this day, and at the moment of her enforcing her good counsel, that a visitor arrived to aid us with his best wishes and experience. It was Mr. Temple.

He had read the account of my father's dissolution, and he had not lost a minute in offering his condolence and assistance at the trying season. It was a benevolent act on the part of my brother's friend, and I thanked him for his consideration. "It was not worth my thanks," he answered, and at the same time he asked for Frederick.

"He is gone," was my reply; "whither I cannot tell you."

"What, left you!" he exclaimed, as if indignant at the thought; "left you here, alone, at such a time! It is impossible, Miss Harrington—a stranger could not do it. Surely he is ignorant of his father's death. He cannot be so insensible to duty. I will not believe it of the man to whom I have given my friendship and my heart. Nature could never wrong herself so far. Is this true, good lady?" he enquired, turning to the hostess.

"I don't wonder you're surprised, sir," was the reply. "You are a gentleman of feeling. Indeed, it is true, sir, though incredible to believe. The day his father died, sir, he left the premises, and hasn't been nigh, nor by, sir, ever since."

"I will not believe it—for I cannot. Instinct in animals is not to be suppressed, and has its claims and laws from which it will not fail. The heart of man cannot do violence to itself. Love will never be restrained."

"Ah, how beautifully you talk, sir!" said my friend. "I quite enjoy

to hear you. But what I say is true. Master Harrington is gone away, and young miss is all alone."

"No, my good woman, not alone! Pardon me, Miss Harrington, if, in the absence of your brother, I assume a brother's privilege. Pray, confide in me. Can I help you? Let me be of service to you. Deal frankly with me. Let me see you placed comfortably and happily in life; it is all I ask—I require. I say too much perhaps. In truth I hardly know what I say or do. I can never forget the interest that was excited in my bosom by our first interview. I am agitated now by what you tell me of your brother—by what I see of your lonely, perilous condition. Do not think me overbold and impertinent, if I ask you of your circumstances! Are you provided for? Are you independent?"

"I have no reason to blush, sir, when I acknowledge to you, that I am at this moment relying for my bread upon the friendship and bounty of this kind person. My father has died insolvent, and I am without a home."

"Miss Harrington, you alarm and agitate me beyond expression! I was not prepared for this communication—it has taken me by surprise! This charitable lady must not go unrewarded. Take this from me," he said, addressing her, and placing a guinea in her hand, "not in payment of what you have done—no money could discharge that obligation—but as a testimonial, slight as it is, of your beneficent and unworldly conduct. And tell me, Miss Harrington, I beseech you, what is it that you propose to do?"

"To go to London without delay, and seek a situation."

"A situation! In heaven's name, as what?"

"I am not particular," I replied. "I can use my hands in many ways. I have no doubt that I shall meet with one to which I can accommodate myself without much difficulty or repugnance."

Mr. Temple paced the room in great uneasiness of mind.

"No, no. I must not permit it," he said at length. "Fate has brought me here, that I might arrogate to myself the right to act on your behalf which a brother has renounced. You would sink under the degradation and indignities to which you are about to expose yourself. It must not be. I cannot allow it. Do not be hasty—do not act without forethought and consideration. Permit me to consider for you. Surely there are many ways of providing for you suitably to your education and cultivated mind. I have many friends—they would be proud to serve you. Indeed, to whom would it not be an honour to save loveliness from contumely and insult?"

I am a woman. I was then a girl, by nature susceptible of flattery, and, from my cruel situation, unused to the accents of tenderness and respect. The terms in which Mr. Temple addressed me, flattered and gently agitated, but did not displease me. I was grateful for the warm interest which he evinced in favour of a friendless orphan; and his handsome, manly countenance, could not tend to diminish the impression that his generosity had wrought. My truant woman's heart already encouraged half-formed visions, the secret sight of which crimsoned my cheek, making it blush with fear and maiden shame. I endeavoured to dismiss them; but, alas! could I be insensible to the fact, which was apparent in every word he uttered? It was impossible to avoid the conviction, that a feeling deeper than that of ordinary philanthropy had been excited in his heart, and that I was an object of his passionate love no less than of his compassion. To have resolved to decline all favours at his hands at the moment of making this discovery, would have been the step of prudence and of

duty. I did not take it. It was not that my vanity was gratified and my better judgment overborne. Loneliness and desertion, which stared me in the face, heightened and improved the hope that I would scarcely trust myself to entertain, and yet entertained with unbounded gratitude, towards the man who had inspired and emboldened it. It was difficult to find an answer to the tender entreaties of my kind adviser. In truth, I knew not what to say. I thanked him for his counsel, and acknowledged that I thought it well to act upon it—to delay my journey—and to consider well the many disadvantages that would accompany my sudden change of life. "If," I added in conclusion, "he would secure me the countenance and aid of his good friends in the prosecution of my object, he might feel assured that I would not willingly discredit his introduction."

"Do not talk so, Miss Harrington, I implore you," he replied. "You cannot conceive my agony and distress. To see you reduced to the necessity of labouring for your livelihood is more than I can calmly bear. Something must be done for you. I am so shocked by what I see and learn, that I find it hard to fix my thoughts. When I have recovered from the stupor, do not doubt but that I may devise some plan for your future life, that will be congenial to your tastes, and worthy the adoption of the best and fairest of her sex."

Mrs. Wybrow, my simple-minded hostess, applied her white apron to her eyes, and wept copiously. "Ah, sir," said she, with feelings very much warmed, I fear, by the handsome present that she had received, "if all the young gentlemen in the world were like you, how different things would be! I am sure if Miss Harrington liked to live here for ever, she should be as welcome as the day is long. I have told her myself, that she is running too fast into this sort of thing; and as you say, sir, if she only waits a little, something may turn up quite *congealed* to her taste."

"Do you really not know where Frederick is?" asked Temple, after having kept silence for a time.

"I do not, indeed," I replied, and shuddered.

"Can you not guess?"

"I cannot."

"Have you any reason to believe that he will soon return?"

"I believe," I answered, shedding bitter tears, "that I shall never see him more."

"I am resolved," said Temple, in a determined tone—moved to it, as I imagined, by witnessing my tears—"I am resolved, Miss Harrington. I will go instantly to town, and see my friends. You cannot be in safer and in better company at present than with this kind and feeling lady. You shall shortly hear from me—sooner, perhaps, than you expect. I do not reckon too much on my influence and power, when I assure you that you shall be well provided for. The beginning of your life has not been happy. The end of it may be happiness to yourself, and to another——"

He hesitated, and gazed at me expressively. I blushed, and bent my head.

Mr. Temple remained in the cottage until a late hour in the evening, when he departed in a chaise which he had hired to convey him to the neighbouring market-town. The favourable estimate which I had formed of his character did not suffer by his behaviour during the day that he passed with us. His conversation was agreeable and animated. He had a hundred subjects at command, of which I had never heard, and to which his appropriate language and his fervour gave a charm as resistless as it was injurious. Now he played with Mrs. Wybrow's children, gave them pence, promised toys, submitted to be beaten, cried in joke, and performed a host

of tricks to make the young ones scream with joy, and to seduce the easy and maternal heart of Mrs. Wybrow. Then he read to me, produced a book, his constant fellow-traveller and best friend—a book of plays—glowing, it is true, with high and passionate poetry, but startling the delicate and unaccustomed ear by the boldness of its subjects, and the freedom as well as laxity of its expression. I should have deemed the perusal of that work unlawful, had not the unhesitating tone of Mr. Temple—the absence of all constraint as he spoke the passages, given a stamp to them that, to my inexperienced judgment, entitled them to currency. Had they been wrong to hear, he never would have read them. His memory, too, was stored with verses—short poems, breathing love, and sanctioning a liberty of thought and action that was not always limited; or if so, not too strictly. These he poured insidiously into my willing ear, carrying them to their destination with the voice of trembling passion, and the look of melting love that was not to be mistaken. He took his leave at length; and his departure was the signal for panegyrics, which the middle-aged but still inexperienced Mrs. Wybrow had been yearning to deliver for many hours before.

"Well, he is indeed," said she, "the picture of a gentleman. It's no use disguising it, he's over head and ears in love. I couldn't help thinking, as he sat down there, what a pretty couple you would make. He's fit for you, Miss Harrington, and you're deserving on him. My stars, what a clever man he is! How he talks! Why, how many books should you think he has got by heart? And isn't he liberal. Only think of giving me a guinea, and the brats about eighteenpence a-piece—quite a fortune for'em. Now, I should say, he's gone to London to see about no situation at all, but just to ask his father leave to marry you, and to make arrangements for the wedding. I don't know what you may think, miss, but if I was a queen—now that would be just the man that I should fancy."

Her praises were not displeasing to me, although I did not tell her so. She spoke during the evening, and until late that night, of little else than Mr. Temple, and I feigned to ply my needle most industriously, whilst I hugged in silence every syllable to my heart, and lost myself in a bright world of fancy, more beautiful and less substantial than the wildest dream of night. For the succeeding week, the subject of our conversation was the same, and lost nothing of its interest and pleasantness. At the end of the week, the following note, reached me through the post:—

"My Dear Miss Harrington,—Permit me to address you thus familiarly, although I have not yet the pleasure of your personal acquaintance. I have heard of your misfortunes, and affliction commands our sympathy and regard even for a stranger. But a stranger you are not. My son, from whom I have heard the unfortunate history of your life, is well known to your brother, and slightly, I believe, to yourself. He is ardent, and has pleaded your cause with a warmth that was not to be resisted, had I been unwilling to listen to the claim that your case was justified in making upon the good feeling of one of your own sex. Would that it were in my power to offer you more than a quiet, comfortable home! James has acquainted me with your desire of becoming a governess. My children need an instructress and a friend—are you willing to become both to them? If so, let your reply to this letter be your appearance at our house. I will meet you as a daughter, and endeavour to make amends for your late sufferings and many trials. Come, and I will receive you with open arms. I am anxious to serve you. The coach which leaves —— on Saturday next, will bring you to the *Golden Key* Inn, in Fleet Street. Any person

there will direct you to our residence, and a hackney coach will convey you to it. If you are silent, and I do not see you on the day I mention, I shall conclude that you have already obtained employment. If you have not been so successful, permit me to be of service to you.—Believe me, my dear Miss Harrington,

"Your sincere friend,

"AGNES TEMPLE."

"Queen Square, London."

Before I had half finished this epistle, the white apron of Mrs. Wybrow was handled with very nervous fingers, and was at last called to its usual work, in fact, for which it seemed that it was put on and worn; viz. the cleansing of her eyes. She was completely overcome by the terms of the letter; and as she had but one way of expressing joy and sorrow, she sobbed until I had finished, and she could speak.

"Well, miss," said she, "gentle-folks have the perlitest, nicest way in life of saying things! It's as good as a sermon to read that letter. I am so glad on your account, you cannot think, Miss Harrington——"

Words were superfluous to good Mrs. Wybrow. Feeling did all for her. She stopped, and cried, and then once more attempted——

"It's a long lane, Miss Harrington, that has no end. I was sure that it would all be settled. Oh, how happy you will be! Now, I'll tell you what I must do. I must make some of them nice cakes that you are so very fond of, and you can take them up for the dear little children. Oh, I dare say they are beauties! Then Mr. Temple liked our cream so; there'll be a pint of that; and then we'll find something for the old lady herself. What should you say to one of them sides of bacon—that streaky side? I'll warrant you, that will eat delicious."

I did not write in answer to this letter. I did not consider. My heart was too full of gratitude to indulge for a moment the thought of wrong. What wrong could there be in such voluntary goodness? The shadow of suspicion did not darken the fair prospect that was now before me. The Saturday arrived. I had made every arrangement for my departure during the intervening days. Mrs. Wybrow had loaded me with her humble presents. I bade her affectionately farewell. I was on my journey. I arrived in London. We reached the inn. The first face that I beheld there was that of James Temple. He awaited the arrival of the coach, and he assisted me to alight. He looked pale and anxious, and the smile with which he greeted me lacked the smallest cheerfulness. He bowed, but did not speak. I was led into a private apartment by a waiter at the inn. My luggage followed me. All was hurry and confusion. Mr. Temple had not yet presented himself. "He has sent, no doubt," thought I, "for the hackney coach." How grieved I was to see him looking ill. There was a gentle knock at the door. I requested the visitor to enter, and Mr. Temple presented himself. He looked worse than ever; there was a wildness about him that I could not understand; he was perplexed and excited, and he evidently wished to say something that his mind would not permit him calmly to utter.

"Miss Harrington," he said, at length, "I am the most unfortunate, the most miserable being in existence."

"What has happened?" I asked, alarmed.

"Miss Harrington," he repeated, "you cannot be insensible to the existence of a passion, which at this moment possesses and consumes me. I have made it evident to you in a hundred ways. I could not conceal it from you. We are not master of ourselves. I saw you and loved—ardently

loved you. From the moment that I beheld you, your image has followed me by night and day, sleeping or waking—wheresoever I have been."

I was terrified by his vehemence, and the suddenness of his declaration; but I had not a word to speak.

"Do not despise me for this behaviour," he continued, "but listen, I implore you, to what I have to say. Before you hate me, hear and pity me. I left you, and returned immediately to London. I told your history to my mother; she was deeply moved at the recital, and the result was the invitation to her house which has led to your present visit, and to this interview, which I would have given worlds to purchase. She knew not then of the love that I bore towards the object of her compassion. She knows it now; and oh—miserable wretch that I am!—refuses you admittance to her house."

"Oh, what have I done, sir?" I asked instinctively.

"Nothing," answered Temple; "nothing that does not redound to your honour, and adorn the beauty that nature has lavished unsparingly upon you. But my mother is unthinking. She doats upon me, and persuades herself that I have fallen into the hands of a designing woman."

My cheek burned with indignation; I was about to reply, but Mr. Temple checked me.

"Ah, Miss Harrington!" he continued; "it is because I know you are the best and most artless, as you are the loveliest of your sex, that I am driven mad by the cruel insinuations of my mother. I know you. She does not. The sight of you would carry conviction to her heart, as it has filled mine with unspeakable and unbounded love."

"Let me return to the cottage," I said, in agitation: "I shall be very happy with Mrs. Wybrow until I obtain a situation. I will return at once."

"Miss Harrington," exclaimed my lover, falling upon his knees, "do not pronounce my death-warrant! Emma, dear Emma! for you are dearer to me than life itself—I have revealed my passion to you—do not treat it lightly. Drive me not to an act which you will never cease to lament and mourn. Do you hate me? Do you regard me with indifference? Say but the word, and I will molest you no longer. I will drag myself from your presence, and finish my wretched existence far, far away from you. Let me be satisfied of that."

I did not answer.

"Dearest Emma," he continued, "I am not indifferent to you. That blush assures me I am not. Your silence speaks more eloquently than words. Then do not leave me. Listen to me, and be merciful. The sudden anger of my mother will abate. The natural goodness of her heart will return, and no one more bitterly than herself will regret the hasty determination which she has formed. She will ask your pardon, and acknowledge that she has done you injustice. All I ask, implore you, is to permit her present feeling to subside. Be sure it will do so. Remain here for a few days. Why not here as well as in the country? For the sake of one whose happiness, whose life depends upon your decision, comply with the request. In a day or two—perhaps to-morrow—all hindrances may be removed, and the present trial will be remembered only to enhance our real felicity. I know my mother. She is passionate, but she is loving and good at heart, and would not injure the worm beneath her feet."

He remained upon his knees. He continued to entreat—the protestations of his ardent passion were reiterated. What was the friendless

and unprotected girl to do? What had she to say whose heart was already touched, whose reason was ensnared and bound? I consented to remain at the inn for a few days—but for a few days only. This was a stipulation. Temple was overjoyed and grateful for what he termed the act of considerate love; and he told me that everything should be done for me to render my temporary stay agreeable and cheerful, and not a moment should be lost in effecting a removal from the place, and an alteration in his mother's views. The subject was then dropped. Temple saw that I needed refreshment. He rang the bell, and requested the man who answered it to prepare a dinner for—his *sister*. The waiter bowed obsequiously and went away, and then I remonstrated against the falsehood that he had spoken.

"It must be done, dear Emma," he replied, "to secure civility and respect. Who suffers by my saying so? Besides, are you not my sister? Am I not your brother? Have I not pledged myself to assume that sacred office, and do a brother's duty by you?"

Stukely, vouchsafe me now your pity, and withhold your scorn. I cannot chronicle the daily steps that led to my disgrace. You have guessed already that the letter was a forgery. It was. Is it strange that I did not suspect it until my ruin gave a new colouring to that and every other thing? It may be so. It is strange, perhaps, that a word spoken against the man on whose integrity and faith I would have staked my life—and did my honour—would have roused indignant unbelief. But so it is. I remained at the hotel for a week. New obstacles arose—difficulties increased. The heart of Mrs. Temple was obdurate. She still denied me admission to her house. Why did I not return to ——? Because the tempter would not have it so. His love increased in proportion to my hardships. He could not live without me. Destruction should follow my refusal of his hand. Well, I did not refuse it. I consented to become his wife. Why did I not? I tell you, because the tempter would not have it so. The declaration of his love—his goodness—his ardour—his respectful manner—his zealous endeavours to administer to my comfort and peace of mind—his manly form—his handsome countenance—his gentlemanly bearing—these were not lost upon me. My heart succumbed. I loved him passionately. His presence became necessary to my happiness. I was dull and melancholy if he were away. I could think of nothing else. It was bliss to have him at my side—imprisonment to dwell without him. I have said enough. What will not woman do for the man she trusts—in whom she collects the fulness of her ripe affections! I was at the mercy of your fellow man. What inhuman monster ever profited so savagely by opportunity? I FELL.

I have asked your pity. You will not accord it; for you know my later history, and there exists the crime committed against yourself, that can never be blotted out or pardoned. Months of unkindness—for unkindness followed possession quickly—did not entirely extinguish the love I felt for my betrayer. I accompanied him to Cambridge. It was there that he opened his door, and bade me seek amongst men a better friend than he could now afford to be. It was there and then that I first saw you; and the horror that I felt of being thrown upon the world, reconciled me to the crime of listening to your love. I have been punished for the act, and I have lived to repent it. Stukely! do not curse my memory. May Heaven bless and protect you! My last prayer is for your happiness, and for the welfare of the sinful and most wretched boy, who wanders through the world with the guilt of blood upon his soul—a father's blood!

The history was finished. Mr. Clayton closed the manuscript, and we were both for many minutes silent.

Oh, wine, wine! whose praises are so clamorously rung around the festive board, and whose virtues supply the song with brilliant thoughts and ardent syllables, what need of eloquence and verse to sound thy fame, whilst *murder* and *seduction* bear ghastly witness to thy potency! Is there a greater crime than these? Name it, and Drunkenness shall claim it for a child!

PART XI.

THE REVULSION.

"He was a man
Who stole the livery of the court of heav'n
To serve the devil in. * * * *
In holy phrase transacted villanies
That common sinners durst not meddle with."
Pollok's Course of Time.

Cardinal Wolsey.—"For holy offices I have a time; a time
To think upon the part of business."
Henry VIII.

MR. CLAYTON was wont to spend many hours daily in a small room, called *a study*. It was a chamber sacred to the occupation followed there. I had not access to it—nor had any stranger, with the exception of two ill-favoured men, whom I had found, for weeks together, constant attendants upon my benefactor. For a month at a time, not a single day elapsed during which they were not closeted for a considerable period with the divine. A three weeks' interval of absence would then take place; Mr. Clayton prosecuted his studies alone and undisturbed, and no strange foot would cross the threshold until the ill-looking men returned, and passed some five weeks in the small sanctuary as before. Who could they be? I had never directly asked the question, curious as I had been to know their history, and the purpose of their visits. Had I not learned from Mr. Clayton the impropriety and sinfulness of judging humanity by its looks, I should have formed a most uncharitable opinion of their characters. They were hard-featured men, sallow of complexion, rigid in their looks. I knew that, attached to the church of Mr. Clayton, were two missionaries—men of rare piety, and of humble origin—small bootmakers, in fact; sometimes I believed that the visitors and they were the same individuals. Circumstances, however, unfavourable to this idea, arose, and I turned from one conjecture to another, until I reposed at length in the belief that they were sinners—sinners of the deepest dye—such as their ill-omened looks betrayed—and that they sought the kind and ever-ready minister to obtain his counsel, and to share his prayers. At all events, this was a subject upon which I received no enlightening from their confidant. Once I took occasion to make mention of it; but, in an instant, I perceived that my enquiry was not deemed proper to be answered. It was to this forbidden closet—the scene of so much mystery

—that, to my great surprise, I found myself one day invited by my benefactor, after I had implored him to release me from an obligation in which I had some weeks before too hastily involved myself—viz. that of working in the vineyard where Mr. Clayton himself proved so zealous a labourer. I had made trial of my skill, and proved myself unequal to the effort.

"Be seated, Caleb," said Mr. Clayton, as we entered the room in company.

"I have been careful," he said, after a short pause, "in not thwarting your own good purposes. I have been most anxious to give your feelings their full bent. Has your conversion been too sudden to endure? Have you so soon regretted the abandonment of the great world and all its pleasures—such as they were to you? Has a life of usefulness and peace no charms? Alas! I had hoped otherwise."

I assured my friend that he had mistaken the motive which had compelled me to forsake, at least for the present, the intention that I had entertained honestly—though, I felt, erroneously—for the last few days. Nothing was further from my thoughts than a desire to mix again in a world of sinfulness and trouble. His precepts and bright example had won me from it; and I prayed only to be established in the principles, in the true knowledge of which I knew my happiness to consist. I was not equal to the task which I had proposed to myself, and he had kindly permitted me to assume. I wished to be his meanest disciple—to acquire wisdom from his tuition—and, by the labour of years, to prepare myself finally for that reward which he had so often announced to me as the peculiar inheritance of the faithful and the righteous. I ceased. My auditor did not answer me immediately. He sat for some minutes in silence, and closed his eyes as if absorbed in thought. At length he said to me——

"You do not surprise me, Caleb. I am prepared for this. I perceived your difficulties from afar. It was inevitable. Self-confidence has placed you where you are. Be happy, and rejoice in your weakness; but turn now to the strong for strength. The work that has begun in your heart must be completed. It shall be so—do not doubt it."

The minister hesitated, looked hard at me, and endeavoured, as I imagined, to find in the expression of my countenance, an index to my thoughts. I said nothing, and he proceeded.

"There are the appointed means. His way is in the sanctuary. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd. There is but one refuge for the outcast. I have but one alleviation to offer you. It is all and everything. Are you prepared to accept it?"

"You are my friend, my guardian, and my father," I replied.

"You have wandered long in the wilderness," continued the minister. "You have fed with the swine and the goats. You have found no nourishment there. All was bleak, and barren, and desolate there. The living waters were dried up, and the bread of life was denied to the starving wayfarer."

"What must be done, sir?"

"YOU MUST ENTER THE FOLD—and have communion with the chosen people. Are you content to do it?"

"Oh, am I worthy," I exclaimed, "to be reckoned in the number of those holy men?"

"I cannot doubt it; but your own spirit shall bear witness to your state. To-morrow is our next church meeting. There, if it be your wish, I will propose you; messengers will be appointed to converse with you. They will come to you, and gather from your experience the evidences of your renewed, regenerated character."

"What shall I say, sir?" I asked, in all simplicity.

"What says the drowning man to the hand that brings him to the shore? Your beating heart will be too ready to acknowledge the mighty work that has been already done on your behalf. Have you forgotten the way you have been led? Point it out to them. Have you been plucked as a brand from the burning? Acknowledge it to them in strains of liveliest gratitude. Does not your soul at this moment overflow at the vivid recollection of all that has been done for it and you? Will it not yearn to sing aloud when strangers come to listen to the song? Then speak to them. Do you not feel, have not a hundred circumstances all concurred to prove, that you exist a vessel chosen to show forth praise? Show it to them, and let them carry back the certain proofs of your redemption—let them convey the sweet intelligence of a brother's safety—and let them bid the church prepare to welcome him with hymns of praise into her loving bosom."

Within a week of the above conversation, two respectable individuals called upon me at Mr. Clayton's house—the accredited messengers of the church in which my eternal safety was about to be secured. One was a thickset man, with large black whiskers and corresponding eyebrows. His countenance had a stern expression—the eye especially, which lay couched like a tiger beneath its rugged overhanging brow. You did not like to look at it, and you could not meet it without unpleasantness and awe. The gentleman was very tall and sturdy—evidently a hairy person; he was unshaven, and looked muscular. Acting under the feeling which led him to despise all earthly grandeur and distinction, and which, no doubt, influenced his conduct throughout life, he was remarkable for a carelessness and uncleanness of attire, as powerful and striking as the odour which exhaled from his broad person, and which explained the profession of the gentleman to be—a working blacksmith. His companion was thin, and neat, and dapper. There was an air about *him* that could not have been acquired except by frequent intercourse with the polished and the rich. He was delicacy itself, incapable of a strong expression, and happier far when he could hint, and not express his sentiments. Had I been subject only to his examination, my ordeal would not have been severe. It was the blacksmith whom I found hard and unimpressible as his own anvil, dark as his forge, and as unpitying as its flames. The thin examiner held the high office of deacon of the church. Whether it was the particularly dirty face of his friend that set him off to such advantage, or whether he had inherent claims to my respect, I cannot tell; well I know, throughout the scrutiny that soon took place, many times I should have fallen beneath the blacksmith's hammer, but for the support and mild encouragement that I found in him. He was most becomingly dressed. He wore a white cravat and no collar. He had light hair closely cut, and his face was as smooth as a woman's. His shirt was whiter than any shirt I have ever seen before or since, and it was made of very fine material. He carried an agreeable smirk upon his countenance, and he disinterred, now and then, some very long and extraordinary word from the dictionary, when he was particularly desirous either to make himself understood or conceal his meaning. He was a ladies' haberdasher.

I received the deputation with a trembling and apprehensive heart. I knew my faith to be sincere, and I believed it to be correct, according to the views of the church of which my reverend friend was the minister and organ. Still, I could not be insensible to the importance of the step which I was about to take, and to the high tone of piety which the true

believers demanded from all who joined their ranks, and partook of their exclusive privileges.

It will not be necessary to repeat in detail the course of my examination. At the close of two hours it was concluded, and I am at this moment willing to confess that it was, upon the whole, satisfactory. I mean to myself —for by my questioners, and by the little haberdasher more particularly, the conference was pronounced most gratifying and comforting in every way. I say *upon the whole;* for I could not, even at that early period of my initiation, and with all my excitement and enthusiasm, prevent the intrusion of some disturbing thoughts—some painful impressions, that were not in harmony with the general tenor of my feelings. I had prepared myself to meet and deal with the appointed delegates of Heaven, and I had encountered *men;* yes, and men not entitled to my reverence and regard, except as the chosen ambassadors of the church. One was low, ignorant, and vulgar. He took no pains to conceal the fact; he rather gloried in his native and offensive coarseness. The other was a smoother man, scarcely less destitute of knowledge, or worthier of respect. Looking back, at this distance of time, upon this strange interview, I am indeed shocked and grieved at the part which I then and there permitted myself to undertake. I do not wonder that, overtaken in a career of misery, the consequence of my own imprudence, I should have been arrested by the voice, and smitten by the eloquence, of Mr. Clayton. I do not wonder that I listened to his arguments, and observed his conduct, until I was reduced to passiveness, and my mind was willing to be moulded to his purposes. But I do wonder and lament that any obscuration of my judgment, any luxuriance of feeling, should have permitted my youthful understanding for an instant to believe that to such men as my examiners the keys of heaven were entrusted, and that on them, and on their voice, depended the reception of a broken-hearted penitent at the mercy-seat of God.

A few words from the haberdasher-deacon at the breaking up of the convocation, or whatever else it might be termed, were satisfactory, in so far as they showed that my temporal prospects were not entirely neglected by those who had become so deeply interested in my spiritual welfare. The blacksmith had hardly brought to a close a somewhat lengthy and very ungrammatical exhortation, that wound up the day's proceedings, when the dapper Jehu Tomkins, jumping at once from the confessional to the revel, shook me cordially by the hand, and most kindly suggested to me that, under the patronage of so important and religious a connexion as that into which I was about to enter, I could not fail to succeed, whatever might be the plan which I had laid down for my future support.

"I've heard all about you," added Jehu, "from our respected minister, and you'll soon get into something now. It's a good congregation, sir—wealthy and influential. I should say we have richer people in our connexion than in any about London. Mr. Clayton is a very popular man, sir—very good, and speaks the truth."

"He is good, indeed!" I answered.

"Sir, grace is sure to follow you now. It is fifteen years since I first sat under Mr. Clayton. Ah! I remember the night I was converted, as if it were yesterday. I always felt up to that very time, the need of something better than I had got. Business had gone wrong ever since I opened shop, and my mind was quite unsettled. Satan tried very hard at me, but it wouldn't do. Sometimes, when my boy had gone home, and shop was shut up, the Tempter would whisper in my ears words like these—'Jehu

THE DELICATE EXAMINATION.

you're insured, over and over again, for your stock; let a spark fall on the shavings and your fortune's made.' Well, sir, once or twice—will you believe it?—the Devil had nearly got it all his own way; but grace prevented, and I was saved. I owe it all to Mr. Clayton. I was told by one or two of my customers to go and hear him, but somehow or other I never did. Satan kept me back. At last the gentleman as was the deacon—him as built the chapel—Mrs. Jehu Tomkins's father—comes to my shop with his daughter, Mrs. Jehu as is now, and spoke to me about the minister. Well, I heard the old gentleman was very rich and pious, and I went the next Sabbath-day as was, with his family, into his pew. I never went anywhere else after that. He seemed to hit the nail just on the head, and I was convinced—oh quite wonderful!—all on a sudden. I was married to Mrs. Jehu before that day twelvemonth. So you see grace followed me throughout, as it will you, my dear brother, if you only mind what you are about, and don't be a backslider."

"Mr. Clayton," said I, "has kindly promised to procure employment for me."

"Ah! and he'll do it, if he says so," rejoined Mr. Tomkins. "That's your man. You stick to him, and you won't hurt. He's a chosen vessel, if ever there was one. What do you say, brother Buster?"

Brother Buster simply groaned his assent, and scowled. He had been for some time anxious to depart, and he now took his leave without further ceremony.

"You wouldn't think that man was a saint to look at him, would you?" asked the deacon, as soon as his friend was gone. "He is, though. He is riper in spiritual matters than any man I know. Ah! the Establishment would give something for a few like him. He'll be taken from us, I fear. We make a idol of him, and that's sure to be punished. It's wonderful what he knows; and how it has come to him we can't tell."

I received a pressing invitation from Mr. Tomkins to visit his "small and 'appy family," as he was pleased to call it, on any evening after eight o'clock, which was his latest business hour. "Mrs. Jehu," I was assured, "was just like her father, and his four small Jehus as exactly like their grandfather, and he wished to say no more for them. After business his family enjoyed invariably a little spiritual refreshment, and that and a hymn made the time pass very agreeably till supper-time, at nine, when he had a 'ot collation, at which he should be most proud to see me."

The close scrutiny on the part of Mr. Buster, proper as it was as a step preliminary, was by no means sufficient to procure for me an easy and unquestioned admission into the church which the blacksmith had so ably represented. There was yet another trial to ensue, and another jury to pronounce upon the merits of the anxious candidate. He had yet to prove, to the perfect satisfaction of the self-constituted junto that styled itself *a church*, how Heaven had mercifully dealt with him—to detail with historic accuracy the method and procedure of his regeneration, and to find evidence of a spiritual change, that carried on its front the proof of his conversion and his accepted state. All this was to be done before I could be *entitled* to the privileges which Messrs. Buster, Tomkins, and the rest had it in their power to bestow. The manner in which this delicate investigation was carried on, its indecorum and profaneness, I never can forget; nor can I, in truth, remember it without humiliation and deep sorrow. Against the indiscreet, unlawful exhibition, I set off my ignorance, simplicity, and desire of serving Heaven; and in these I look for my apology for the share I had in such proceedings.

I received, in due form, a requisition to appear before the body of the

church, at its general meeting. I appeared. The chapel was thronged, the majority of members being women. In the hands of nearly every third person was a paper. I was not then aware of its contents; if I had been, the ceremony would, in all probability, have concluded with my entrance. Will it be believed, that this paper contained a formula of the questions which were to test the quality of my faith, and to pronounce upon the vitality and worth of my spiritual pretensions! Any person present was at liberty to address me, and to form his own opinion of my case from the manner and the matter which their ingenuity elicited. At the suggestion of Mr. Tomkins, who, in his capacity of deacon, was remarkably active on this occasion, it was deemed proper that I should enter upon my "experience" at once. My heart fluttered as I rose to comply with the demand, and the chapel was hushed. It will be sufficient to say, that I repeated my entire history, and secured the attention of my auditory until I had spoken my last word. There were parts of the narrative which I could, with a glance, perceive to be peculiarly *piquant* and acceptable. As these occurred, a rustling and a murmur expressed the subdued applause. When, for instance, I mentioned the disgust which I had conceived for the University *upon losing the scholarship*, and the uneasiness which I afterwards felt as long as I continued a member of that community, a few of the most acute looked at one another, and shrugged mysteriously, as who should say, "How wondrous are the ways of Providence!" and when I arrived at the point of my deliverance by the hand of their own minister, there would have been, I thought, no end to the gesticulations, expressions of gratitude and joy, that burst from the "church," in spite of the praiseworthy efforts of the minister to control and keep them down. When I had concluded, and whilst the half-suppressed rejoicing still buzzed in the chapel, the stern Buster rose, and presented to me the unmitigated force of his unpleasant eye. Silence prevailed immediately.

"Now, sir," said my old friend, "what makes you think yourself a child of grace? Speak out, if you please; some of us is rather deaf."

"The loathing that I feel of what I was."

"Good!" said Jehu Tomkins, with strong emphasis, and loud enough to be heard by every one.

"When did you feel the fetters fust busting from your spirit?"

"Not till I heard the minister's kind voice," was the reply.

"Do you always feel as strong upon the subject? Do you feel your spirit always willing?"

"Oh no!" I answered, "there are dreadful fluctuations, and there is nothing so uncertain as self-dependence. I have dark and bitter moments, when I feel, in all its power, the melancholy truth—'When I would do good, evil is present with me.'"

"Capital sign!—capital sign!" exclaimed Jehu Tomkins again; "quite sufficient! quite sufficient!"

Yes, it was so. A few questions were put to me by individuals, rather for the sake of gratifying an impertinent curiosity, than that of elucidating further proof of my proficiency, and the ceremony was finished by my formal reception into the body of the church. A prayer was offered, an address delivered, a hymn sung—the eyes of many ladies were turned with smiling interest upon me—and the meeting separated. Jehu Tomkins was the first to congratulate me upon the happy issue of my trial.

"You are a made man, sir, depend upon it," said he, with his first salutation. "You can't fail. There—do you see that fat man that's just going out—him as has got on the Indy'ankycher?—I sold him that—he came on purpose to hear you, and, if he found you up to the mark, he's

going to provide for you. He belongs to all our societies, and just does what he pleases. His word's a law. We've a boiled leg of mutton at nine to-night. Suppose you come to us, and finish the day there? Bless me, what a full meeting we've had! Here's a squeezing!" There was certainly some difficulty in our egression. The people had gathered into a crowd at the small doorway, and men jostled and made their way without regard to others in their vicinity. Lost as I was in the indiscriminate host, a few observations fell upon my ear that were not, I presume, especially intended for it.

"Well," said a greasy youth, not many yards distant from me, "I doubt his having had a call. There wasn't life enough in it for me. I shouldn't be surprised if he's a black sheep after all. I wish I had put a question or two to him. I think I could have shown Satan in his heart pretty quick."

"Now you say it," replied the person addressed, "I did think him very backward and lukewarm. I didn't like his tone altogether. Ah! what a thing experimental religion is! You know what it is, and so do I; but I werry much fear that delooded young man is as carnal-minded as my mother was, that went below, though I say it, as contented and unconcerned as if she was going to the saints in glory."

The information conveyed to me by Mr. Tomkins, as we issued from the chapel, was not unfounded. The day subsequent to my admittance into the bosom of the church, I was requested to attend the minister in the *sanctum* already referred to. Upon reaching it, I discovered the fat gentleman of the preceding evening, dressed as he was on the previous occasion, and still adorned with Jehu's India handkerchief. Both he and Mr. Clayton were seated at table, and writing materials were before them. The moment I entered the apartment, the fat gentleman held out his hand, and shook mine with much stateliness. His name was Bombasty, and he was the bearer of an official appointment. Henceforth I was to be the travelling secretary of a Christian Instruction Society, in connexion with Mr. Clayton's "church," with a salary of 150*l.* a-year. The very next morning I entered on my duties, Mr. Clayton becoming security for my good behaviour to the extent of one thousand pounds.

It was about a month after my installation into my new office, that business connected with the society carried me to the village of Highgate. It was late in the evening when my commission was completed, and I was enabled, after a day of excessive fatigue, to direct my steps once more homeward. The stage-coach, which set out from the village for London twice during the day, luckily for me, was appointed to make its last journey about half an hour after my engagements had set me at liberty. A mile, across fields, intervened between me and the coach-office. Short as the distance was, it was anything but an agreeable task to get over it, with the rain spitting into my face, the boisterous wind beating me back, and the darkness of night confounding me at every turn. In good time, however, I reached the inn. Providence favoured me. There were but two seats unoccupied in the coach; one was already engaged by a gentleman who had requested to be taken up a mile forward; the other had just been given up by a lady who had been frightened by the storm, and had postponed her return to London to the following day. This seat I immediately secured, and in a few minutes afterwards we were on our way towards Babylon. We made but little progress. The breed of coach-horses has been much improved since the period of which I write; and a journey from Highgate to London was a much more important event than a railway conductor of the present day would suppose. My companions

were all men. Their conversation turned upon the topics of the day. A momentary crisis had taken place in the mercantile world; and for many days I had heard nothing spoken of but the vast losses which houses and individuals of high character and standing had incurred, and the bankruptcy with which the community had become suddenly threatened. The subject had grown stale and wearisome to me. It had little interest, in fact, for one whose humble salary of one hundred and fifty pounds per annum depended so little upon the great fluctuations of commerce; and I accordingly disposed myself for sleep as soon as the words *bills*, *money*, and *bankruptcy*, became the staple matter of discourse. I had scarcely established a comfortable doze before the coach stopped suddenly, and awoke me. It had halted for the last inside. A gentleman, apparently stout and well wrapped up—it was impossible to speak positively on the subject, the night was so very dark—trod his way into the vehicle over the toes of his fellow-passengers, and took his seat. The coach was once more moving towards the metropolis, and again I endeavoured to lull myself to sleep. The same expressions proceeded from the lips of the travellers, and they were growing more and more indistinct and shadowy, when I was startled all of a sudden by one of the most palpable sounds that had ever disturbed and confounded a dreamer. I sat up and listened, coughed to convince myself that I was certainly awake, and the sounds were repeated as clear and as audible as before. I would have sworn that Mr. Clayton was the gentleman whom we had last picked up—that he was now in the coach with me—and was now talking, if the words which fell from the traveller had not been such as he would never have used, and the subject on which he spoke had not been one upon which Mr. Clayton, I believed, was as ignorant as a child. The resemblance between the voices was so great, that I pronounced the phenomenon the most extraordinary that had ever occurred to me; and growing quite wakeful from the incident, I continued to listen to the accents of the speaker, until once or twice I had almost thought it my duty to acquaint him with the remarkable fact, which he was now living to illustrate. But I held my peace, and the conversation proceeded without interruption.

"You may depend upon it," said one gentleman, "things must get worse before they'll mend. Half the mischief isn't done yet. There's a report to day that —— cannot hold out much longer. It will be a queer thing if they smash. Many petty tradesmen bank with that house, who will be ruined if they go. Things are certainly in a very sweet state."

"You do not mean," said *the voice*, trembling with emotion or alarm, "that the house of —— threatens to give way? I have been in the city to-day, and did not hear a syllable of this. I think you must be mistaken. Good God, how frightful?"

Well, it was really wonderful! I could have sworn that Mr. Clayton was the speaker. Had he not concluded with the ejaculation, my doubt would certainly have ceased. That exclamation, of course, removed the supposition entirely.

"You'll find I'm right, sir," was the reply of the traveller who spoke first. "At least, I fear you will. I hope I may be wrong. If you have anything in their hands, you would find it worth your while, I think, to pay them an early visit to-morrow morning. If there's a run upon them, nothing in the world can save them."

"And is it true," asked *the voice*, "that —— stopped payment on Tuesday? I came to town from Warwickshire only yesterday, and this is the first news that I heard."

"Oh, there's no doubt about that!" answered a third person; "but that surprised nobody. The only wonder is, how he managed to keep afloat so long. He has been up to the chin for the last twelvemonth or more. I hope you don't lose there, sir?"

"Mine has been the devil's luck this year," continued *the voice*, in a bitter savage tone, that never belonged to Mr. Clayton. "Yes, gentlemen, I lose heavily by them both. But never mind, never mind, *one* shall wince for it, if he has been playing ducks and drakes with my good money. He shall feel the scourge, depend upon it. I'll never leave him till he has paid me back in groans. Heaven, what a sum!"

The voice said no more during the journey. The other gentlemen, having lost nothing by the various failures, discussed matters with philosophy and praiseworthy decorum. Sometimes, indeed "the third person" grew slightly facetious and jocose when he represented to himself what he termed "the queer cut" that some old friend would display on presenting his cheque for payment at the rickety counter of Messrs. ——— & Co.; but no deeper expression of feeling escaped one of those who spoke so long and volubly on what concerned themselves so very little. I was puzzled and disturbed. The stranger had returned from Warwickshire the day before. Twice during my residence with the minister, business of importance had carried him to that county. It was certainly a curious coincidence; but coincidences more curious pass by us every day unheeded. It would have been absurd to conclude from that the identity of the stranger; yet the fact, coupled with *the voice*, staggered and confounded me. I said nothing, but determined, as soon as we reached the public streets, to call to my aid the light —feeble as it was—of the dimly-burning lamps, which, at the time I speak of, were placed at a considerable distance from one another along the principal streets of London, scattering no light, and looking like oil lamps in the last stage of a lingering consumption. These afforded me little help. The weakest effort of illumination imaginable strayed across the coach window as we passed a burner, about as serviceable as the long interval of darkness that ensued, and far more tantalizing. We were driving through the city. I was still brooding over the singular occurrence when the coach stopped. The stranger alighted. I endeavoured to obtain sight of him; but he was so wrapped and clothed that I did not succeed. The coach was on its way again, and I had just opportunity enough to discover that we had halted at the corner of the street in which Mr. Clayton resided. I had been so intent upon scanning the figure of the traveller, that the fact had escaped me. Had I been aware of it, I would certainly have followed the man, and seen him at all events safely beyond the door of the minister. Now it was too late.

I could not repress the desire which I felt to visit Mr. Clayton on the following morning. I went to him at an early hour. If he and the stranger were one and the same person, I should be made aware of it at a glance. The cause that had affected him so deeply in the stage-coach existed still, and his manner must betray him. My suspicions were, thank Heaven! instantly removed. I found my friend tranquil as ever, busy at his old occupation, and welcoming me with his usual smile of benevolence. He was paler than usual, I thought, but this impression only convinced me how difficult it is to be charitable and just, when bias and prejudice once take possession of us. My friend was, if anything, kinder and more affectionate than ever. He spoke to me about my new employment, gave me his advice on points of difficulty, and bade me consult him always, and without hesitation, when doubt might lead me into danger. He could not tell me how happy he had been made by having secured a competency for

me; and he hoped sincerely that no act of mine would ever cause him to regret the step that he had taken.

"Indeed," said he, "I have great confidence in you, Caleb. I do not know another person in the world upon whose character I would have staked so large a sum. In truth, I should not have been justified. A thousand pounds is a heavy venture for one so straitened as I am. But you are worthy of it all. You are a faithful and good boy, and will never give me reason to repent my generosity. Will you, child?"

"No, sir," I replied; "not if I am master of myself."

"It is strange," continued the good man, "how we attach ourselves to individuals! There are some men who repel you at first sight—with whom your feelings are at variance as oil with water. Others, again, who win us with a look—to whom we could confide the secrets of our inmost heart, and feel satisfied of their losing nothing of their sacredness. Have you never experienced this, Caleb?"

"I could speak to you, sir," said I, in return, "as unreservedly as to myself."

"Yes, and I to you. It is a strange and beautiful arrangement. Providence has a hand in this, as in all other sublunary dispensations. We were created to be a comfort and a joy to one another, and to reciprocate confidence and love. Such instances are not confined to modern times. History tells us of glorious friendships in the ancient world. The great of old—of Greece and Rome—they who advanced to the very gate and threshold of TRUTH, and then despairingly turned back—they have honoured human nature by the intensity and permanency of their attachments. But what is a Pagan attachment in comparison with that which exists amongst believers, and unites in bonds that are indissoluble the faithful hearts of pious Christians!"

"Ah, what, indeed, sir!"

"Come to me to-morrow, Caleb," continued my friend, changing the subject. "Let me see you as often as your duties will permit you. We must not be strangers. I did not intend to give you up so easily. It is sweet and refreshing to pursue our old subjects of discourse. You are not tired of them?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Come, then, to-morrow."

It was truly delightful to listen to the minister. I had never known him more sweetly disposed and more calm than on this occasion. He was unruffled by the presence of one anxious thought. Ah! how different would he have been if he had really proved to be my coach acquaintance! How I despised myself for the one unkind half suspicion which I had entertained so derogatory to the high character of the saint. But it was a great comfort to me, nevertheless, to be so satisfied of my delusion, and to feel so easy and so happy in my mind at the close of our long interview. According to my promise, I saw the minister on the following day. He was as peaceful and heavenly-minded as before. Another appointment was made and kept—another succeeded to that; and for one fortnight together, I spent many hours daily in the society of my respected friend.

In pursuance of an arrangement which we had made, I called one afternoon at Mr. Clayton's house, and was distressed to hear that he was confined to his bed by a sudden attack of illness. He had directed his servant to acquaint all visitors with his condition, and to admit no one to him with the exception of the medical attendant and myself. I was eager to profit by my privilege, and was in a few seconds at the bedside of my benefactor. He was reading when I approached him, and looked flushed and agi-

tated. He put his book away from him, and held out his hand to me. I pressed it most affectionately.

"I have been ill, Caleb," he began, "but I am better now, and I shall be quite well soon. Do not be alarmed."

"How did it happen, sir?" I asked.

We are in the flesh now, dear boy, and are subject to the evils of the flesh. Hereafter it will be otherwise. Sorrow and distress, we are told, shall be no more. Oh, happy time for sinners! I have grievously offended. This very day I have permitted worldly thoughts to disturb and harass me, and to shake the fleshly tabernacle. It was wrong, very wrong."

"What has happened, sir?" I enquired.

The minister looked hard and tenderly upon me, pressed my hand again, and bade me take a chair.

"Bring it near to the bed, Caleb," said Mr. Clayton; "I like to have you near me. I am better since you came. To see you is always soothing to my mind. I am reminded, then, that I am not altogether so worthless and insignificant a worm as I believe myself, since I have been able to do so much for you. Tell me, do you still like the employment that I procured for you?"

"I would not resign it for any other that I know of. It is everything to me. I feel my independence, and I have been told that I am useful to my fellow-creatures. It would be a bitter hour to me, sir, that should find me deprived of my appointment."

"And that hour is very distant, Caleb, if you are sensible of your duty, and grateful to the instruments which Heaven has raised for you. You shall always feel your independence, and always hear that you are useful and respected. Be but faithful. It is a lesson that I have repeated to you many times—it cannot be told too often."

"You are a patient and a kind instructor, sir."

"Come closer to me, Caleb, and now listen. But first—look well at me, and tell me what you see."

I looked as he required, but gave no answer.

"Tell me, do you see the lines and marks that beggary and ruin bring upon the countenance of men? Does poverty glare from any one expression? *I am a lost and ruined man.*"

"You, sir?"

"Yes. The trifling pittance upon which I lived, and barely lived, and yet from which I could still extract enough to do a little good—to feed, perhaps, one starving throat—is wrested, torn from me, and from those who shared in what it might obtain. I am myself a beggar."

Mr. Clayton became agitated as he spoke, and I implored him to compose himself.

"Yes—it is that I wish to do. I should be above the influence of dross. And for myself I am. Would that I might suffer alone! And this is not all. The man who has effected my ruin owes everything to me. I found him penniless, and raised him to a condition that should have inspired him with regard and gratitude. I would have trusted that man with confidence unbounded. I did entrust him with my all, and he has beggared and undone me."

"Take it not to heart, sir," I said, soothing the afflicted man; "things may not be so bad as you suppose."

"They cannot be worse," was the reply; "but I will *not* take it to heart. The blow is hard to bear—the carnal man must feel it—yet I am not without my solace. Read to me, Caleb."

I read a chapter from the work that was lying on the bed. It was called

"*The Good Man's Comfort in Affliction.*" It was effectual in restoring my friend to composure. He spoke afterwards with his usual softness of manner.

"This bad man, Caleb," he resumed, "is a member of our church. I am sorry for it—grievously, bitterly sorry for it. The scandal must be removed. Personally, I would be as passive and forbearing as a child; but the church suffers whilst one such member is permitted to profane her ordinances. He must be cut off from her. It must be done. The church must disavow the man who has betrayed her minister, and disgraced himself. I have been your friend, Caleb—you must now prove mine."

"Most willingly," said I.

"This business must be brought before a general meeting of the church. From me the accusation will come with ill grace, and yet a public charge must be preferred. You must be the champion of my cause. Yours shall be the task of conferring a lasting obligation on your friend—yours shall be the glory of ridding the sanctuary of defilement."

"How am I to act, sir?"

"Your course is very easy, child. A meeting shall be convened without delay. You shall attend it. You shall be made master of the case. You must propose an examination of his affairs on the part of the church. The man has failed—he is a bankrupt—our church is pure, and demands an investigation into the questionable conduct of her children. This you shall do. The church will do the rest."

I know not how it was—I cannot tell what led to it; but a cold shudder crept through my body, and a sudden sickness overcame me. I thought of the coach scene—*the voice* seemed more like than ever—the tones were the very same. I seemed unexpectedly enclosed and entangled in some dreadful mystery. I could not conceive why I should hesitate to accept the invitation of my friend with alacrity and pleasure. He was my benefactor, preserver, best and only friend. He had been defrauded, and he called upon me now to perform a simple act of justice. A man under much less obligation to the minister would have met his wishes joyfully; but I *did* hesitate and hold back. A natural suggestion, one that I could not control or crush, told me, as loudly as a voice could speak, not to commit myself by an immediate and rash consent. It must have been the *coach*—for, previously to that adventure, had the minister commanded me to accuse a hundred men, a hint would have sufficed for my obedience. But that unfortunate occurrence, now revived by the manner of my friend—by the expressions which he employed—by the charge which he adduced against the unhappy member of his church—filled me with doubt, uncertainty, and alarm. Mr. Clayton was not slow to remark what was passing in my mind.

"How is this, Caleb?" he enquired. "You pause and hesitate."

"What has he done, sir?" I asked, in my confusion, hardly knowing what I said.

"Done!" exclaimed the minister, with an offended air. "Caleb, he has ruined the man who has made you what you are."

It was too true. Mr. Clayton had indeed made me what I was. It was a just reproof. It was ingratitude of the blackest character, to listen so coldly to his wishes. For months I had received daily and hourly the most signal benefits from his hands. He had never till now called upon me to make the shadow of a return for all his disinterested love—*disinterested*, ah, was it so? I hated myself for the momentary doubt—and yet the doubt returned upon me. If I had not heard his voice in the coach, such a suspicion would have been impossible. *Now*, anything seemed

possible—nothing was too extraordinary to happen. Well, it was little that the minister requested me to do. I had but to demand an investigation into the man's affairs. It was easily done, and without any cost or sacrifice of principle. But why could not the minister demand the same himself? "It would be unseemly," he asserted. Well, it might be—why had he not selected an elder member of the church? Because, as he had often told me, there was none so dear to him. This was plain and reasonable, and all this passed through my brain with the rapidity of thought in an instant of time.

"You may command me, sir," I said at length.

"No, Caleb, I will not *command* you. To serve your friend would have been, I deemed, a labour of love. I did not *command* you, and I now retract the trifling request which I find I was too bold to make."

"Do not talk so to me, Mr. Clayton, I entreat you. I am disturbed and unwell to-day. Your illness has unsettled me. Pray, command me. Speak to me as is your wont—with the same kindliness and warmth. You know I am bound to you; let me serve you in any way you please."

"We will speak of it some other time. Let us change the subject now. There are twenty men who will be eager to comply with the wishes of their minister. An intimation will suffice."

"But why, sir," I returned—"why should others be privileged to do your bidding, and I denied? Forgive my apparent coldness, and give me my instructions."

"Not now," said Mr. Clayton, softened by my returning warmth. "Let us read again. Some other time."

In a few days the subject was again introduced, and I put in possession of the history of the unfortunate man who was so soon to be brought under the anathema of the church. According to the statement of the minister, the guilty person had received at various times from him as a loan no less a sum than four thousand pounds, the substance of his wealth, besides an equal amount from other sources, for which Mr. Clayton had made himself accountable. Mr. Clayton had implicated himself so seriously, as he said, for the advantage of the man whom he had known from boyhood, and raised from beggary, simply on account of the love he bore him, and in consideration of his Christian character. Of every farthing thus advanced the minister had been defrauded, and within a month the trader had declared himself a bankrupt. That the minister should have acted so inconsiderately and prodigally might seem strange to any one who did not thoroughly understand the extreme unselfishness of his disposition. Towards me he had behaved with an equal liberality; and I, at least, had no right to question the truth of every word he spoke. The conduct of the man appeared odious and unpardonable; and I regretted that I should have doubted, for one moment, the propriety of assisting so manifest an act of justice. Let me acknowledge that there was much need of self-persuasion to arrive at this conclusion. I wished to believe that I felt *urged* to my determination; but the necessity that I experienced of working myself up to a conviction of the justice of the case, militated sadly against so pleasing a delusion.

The second church meeting in which it fell to my lot to perform a distinguished character, took place soon after the communication which I received from my respected friend. It was convened with the especial object of enquiring into the circumstances connected with the failure of Mr. George Whitefield Bunyan Smith. The chapel was, if possible, fuller

than on the former evening, and the majority of members was, as before, women. A movement throughout the assembly—a whispering, and a ceaseless expectoration, indicated the raciness and interest which attached to the matter in hand, and every eye and mouth seemed opened in the fulness of an anxious expectation. I sat quietly and uncomfortably, and my heart beat palpably against my clothes. I endeavoured to paint the villany of Mr. Smith in the darkest colours, and, by the contemplation of it, to rouse myself to self-esteem—but the effort was a failure. I could see nothing but the man in the coach, and hear nothing but *the voice*, which sounded in my ears louder than ever, *and far more like;* and I became at length perfectly satisfied that I had no business to stand in the capacity of Mr. Smith's accuser. It was too late to recant. The bell had rung—the curtain was up—and the performances were about to begin.

A hymn, as usual, ushered in the proceedings of the day. The fifty-second psalm was then read by the minister, in the beautiful tone which he knew so well how to assume, and reverence and awe accompanied his emphatic delivery. Ah! could I ever forget the hour when those accents first dropped with medicinal virtue on my soul—when every syllable from his lips brought unction to my bruised nature—and the dark shadows of earth were dissipated and destroyed, beneath the clear, pure light of heaven that he invoked and made apparent! Why passed the syllables now coldly and ineffectually across the heart they could not penetrate? Why glittered they before the eye with phosphorescent lustre, void of all heat and might? I could not tell. The charm was gone. It was misery to know it. The minister having concluded, "Brother Buster was requested to engage in prayer." That worthy rose *instanter*. First, he coughed, then he made a face—an awful face—then closed his eyes—then opened them again, looked up, and stretched forth his arms. At last he spoke. He prayed for the whole world, including the islands recently discovered, "even from the river to the oceans of ages"—then for Europe, and "more especially" for England, and London "in particular," but "chiefly" for the parish in which the chapel stood, and "principally" for the Chosen People then and there assembled; and, "above all" for the infatuated man upon whose account they had been brought together. "Oh! might the delooded sinner repent *off* his sin, and having felt the rod, turn from the error *off* his ways. Oh! might the church have grace to purify itself; and oh! might the vessel wot was chosen this night to bring the criminal to justice, be hindood with strength for the work; and oh! might the criminal be enabled to come out of it with clean hands, (which he very much doubted;) and oh! might the minister be preserved to his church for many years to come; and oh! might he himself be a door-keeper in heaven, rather than dwell in the midst of wickedness and sinners!" This was the substance of the divine supplication, offered up by Jabez Buster, in the presence of the congregation, and listened to with devout respect and seriousness by the refined and intellectual Mr. Clayton. Another hymn succeeded immediately. It must have been written for the occasion; for the sentiment of it was in accordance with the prayer. It was a wail over the backsliding of a fallen saint. To the assembly thus prejudiced—an assembly made up of men of business and their wives, mechanics, dress-makers, servant-maids, and the like—an address suitable to their capacities was spoken. Mr. Clayton himself delivered it.——He trembled with emotion when he referred to the painful duty which he was now called upon to perform. "Dear brethren," said he, "you are all aware of the unhappy condition of that brother who has long been bound

to us by every tie that may unite the brethren in cordial and in Christian love. Truly he has been dear to all of us; and for myself, I can with sincerity aver, that no creature living was dearer to me in the flesh than him upon whose conduct we are met this night in Christian charity to adjudicate. Yes, he was my equal, my guide, and my acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and we walked to the house of prayer in company. I hope, I pray—would that I might add that I believe!—the sin that has been committed in the face of the church, and before the world, may be found not to lie at the door of him we loved and cherished. We are not here to take cognizance of the temporal concerns of every member of our congregation. We have no right to do this so long as the church is kept pure, and suffers not by the delinquencies of her children. If the limb be unworthy and unsound, let it be lopped off. You have heard that the worldly affairs of our brother are crushed; it is whispered abroad that there is reason to fear the commission of discreditable acts. Is this so? If it be true, let the whisper assume a bolder form, and pronounce our brother unworthy of a place with the elect. If it be false, let every evil tongue be silenced, and let us rejoice exceedingly, yea, with the timbrel and dance, with stringed instruments and loud-sounding cymbals. For my own part, I will not believe him guilty until proof positive has made him so. His accuser is here this night. From what I know of our young brother, I am satisfied he will proceed most cautiously. Should he suggest simply an investigation into the recent transactions of the unfortunate man, it will be our duty to act upon that suggestion. If he comes armed with evidences of guilt, they must be examined with a kind but still impartial spirit. I know not to what extent it is proposed to proceed. It is not for me to know it. I am not his prosecutor. I shall not pronounce upon him. It is for you to judge. If he be proved culpable in this most melancholy business, and, alas! I fear he must be if reports are true—though you must be careful to discard reports and look to testimony only—our course is plain and easy. Pardon is not with us; it must be sought elsewhere. I will not detain you longer. Brother Stukely, the church will listen to your charge."

But Brother Stukely had been for some time rendered incapable of speech. He was staggered and overwhelmed. He distrusted his eyes, his ears, and every sense that he possessed. What!—was *this* Mr. Clayton, the meek, the pious, the good, the benevolent, the just, the truth-telling, the Christian, and the minister? What!—could he assert that he was satisfied of his victim's innocence until I should prove him guilty—I, who knew nothing of the man and his affairs but what I gathered from his own false lips? There was some terrible mistake here. I dreamt, or raved. What!—had the history of the last twelvemonth been a cheat—a fable? How was it—where was I? What!—could Mr. Clayton talk thus—could HE descend to falsehood and deceit—HE, the immaculate and infallible? What a moral earthquake was here! What a re-enacting of the fall of man! But every eye was upon me, and the church was silent as death, waiting for my rising. The chapel commenced swimming round me. I grew sick, and feared that I was becoming blind; for a mist came before my eyes, and confounded all things. At length I was awakened to something like consciousness, by a rapid and universal expectoration. I rose, and became painfully distressed by a conflict of opposing feelings. I remembered, in spite of the present obliquity of the minister, his great kindness to me—I remembered it with gratitude. This urged me to speak aloud, whilst a sense of justice as strongly demanded silence; and

pity for the man whom I had undertaken to accuse, but who had never offended me, cried shame upon me for the words I was about to utter. For a second I stood irresolute, and a merciful interference was sent to rescue me.

"Why," exclaimed a voice that came pleasing to my ears—"why are you going to accuse this here brother? Harn't twenty men failed afore, and you never thought of asking questions?"

I looked round, and my friend Thompson, of happy memory, nodded familiarly, and by no means disconcertedly, to me. I had never seen him in the chapel before. I did not know that he was a member. Here was another mystery! His words were the signal for loud disapprobation. He had marred the general curiosity at an intensely interesting moment, and the anger that was conceived against him was by no means partial. The minister rose in the midst of it. He looked very pale and much annoyed; but his manner was still mild, and his expressions as full of charity and kind feeling as ever.

"It was a proper enquiry," he said; "one that should immediately be answered." Heaven forbid that their conduct, in one particular, should savour of injustice! In due time the explanation would have been offered. Had their brother waited for that time, he would have found that this harsh observation might have been withheld. The unfortunate man needed not the champion who had stood so irreverently forward. "I can assure our brother, that there is one who will hear of his innocence with greater joy than any other man may feel for him." But it was his duty to state, and publicly, that there were circumstances connected with this failure, that unfavourably marked it from every other that had taken place amongst them. These must be enquired into. Their brother Stukely had been interrupted in the charge which he was about to make. He repeated that he knew not how far that charge might have been brought home. He would propose now, that two messengers be appointed to wait upon the bankrupt, and to examine thoroughly his affairs, and that, previous to their report, no further proceedings should take place. The purity and disinterestedness of their conduct should be made apparent. Brothers Buster and Tomkins were the gentlemen whom he proposed for the delicate office, with the full assurance that they would execute their commission with Christian charity, tempering justice with heavenly mercy.

The assembly gave a reluctant consent to this arrangement. "Such things," it was argued, "were better settled at once; and it would have been far more satisfactory if the bankrupt's matters had been disclosed to the meeting, who had come on purpose to hear them, and had neglected important matters at home, rather than be disappointed." The meeting, however, dissolved with a hymn, sung without spirit or heart. At the close of it, the minister retired. He passed me on his way; looked at me coldly, and I thought a frown had settled on his brow almost in spite of him. I was scarcely in the open street again, before Thompson was at my side, shaking my hand with the greatest heartiness.

"Well," said he, "I should much sooner have thought of seeing the devil in that chapel than you, any how. Why, what does it all mean? I thought you were in Brummagem."

"Ah! Thompson," I exclaimed, sighing, "I wish I were! It is a long history."

"Well, do let's have it, I *am* astonished."

I put him in possession of my doings since we parted at the Bull's

Head Inn, in Holborn. I had not finished when we arrived at my lodgings. I invited my old friend to supper, and, after that meal, he heard the conclusion of the narrative.

"Well," said he at last, "some people don't believe in sperits. Now I do. Now I believe that a sperit has brought you and me together again. You've told me a good deal. Now, I'll tell you something. Clayton's an out-and-outer."

"He's a mysterious and unintelligible being!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," answered Thompson, "you were always fond of them fine words. P'r'aps you mean the same as me, after all. What I mean is, that fellow beats all I ever came near. Talk of the Old Un! He's a babby to him."

"I can believe anything now," I answered.

"I don't complain; because I think it serves me right. I did very well at our parish church, and had no business to leave it; and I shouldn't either, if I hadn't been a easy fool all my life. I went on right well there, and understood the clergyman very well, and I should have done to this day if it hadn't been for my missus. She's always worriting herself about her state; and she happened to hear this Mr. Clayton, and nothing would please her but we must join his congregation, the whole biling lot of us, and get elected, as they call it. She said all was cold in the church, and nothing to catch hold on there. I'm blessed if I haven't catched hold of a good deal more than I like in this here chapel. They call one another brothers—sich brothers, I fancy, as Cain was to Abel. They are the rummest Christians you ever see'd. Just look at the head of them—that Mr. Clayton, rolling in riches——"

"In what?" said I, interrupting him. "You mistake. The little that he had is lost."

"Oh, don't you be gammoned!" was the reply. "What he has lost won't hurt him. He's got enough now to buy this street, out and out. He's the greediest fellow for money this world ever saw."

"I am puzzled, Thompson," said I.

"Yes, perhaps you are, and you'll be more puzzled yet when you know all. Why, what is all this about poor Smith? I knew him before Clayton ever got hold of him, when the chap hadn't a halfpenny to fly with, but was a most oudacious fellow at spekylating and inventions, and was always up to something new. One day he had a plan for making moist sugar out of bricks—then soap out of nothing—and sweet oil out of stones. At last Clayton hears of him, hooks him up, and gets him to the chapel; first converts him, and then goes partners with him in the spekylations—let's him have as much money as he asks for, and because soap doesn't come from nothing, and sugar from bricks, and sweet oil from stones, he stops short, sews him up, drives him into the Gazette, and now wants to throw him into the world a beggar, without name and character, and with ten young 'uns hanging about his widowed arm for bread."

"Oh, it's dreadful if it's true!" said I; "but if he has robbed the minister, whatever Mr. Clayton may be, he ought to be punished."

"But it isn't true, and there's the villany of it. Smith's a fool; you never see'd a bigger in your life; and though he thinks himself so clever in his inventions and diskiveries, he's as simple as a child in business. Why, he gave three thousand pounds for the machinery wot was to make soap out of nothing; and so all the money's gone. How sich a deep un as Clayton ever trusted him, I can't tell. He's wexed with himself now, and wants to have his spite upon his unfortunate tool."

"I can hardly believe it," said I.

"No; and do you think I would have believed it the first day as missus

made me come and listen to that out-and-outer? and do you think if I had known about it, they would ever have lugged me in to be a brother? You shall take a walk with me to-morrow, if you please; and if you don't believe it then of your own accord, why I sha'n't ask you."

"He has been so kind, so generous to me. He has behaved so unlike a mercenary man."

"Yes; that's just his way. That's what he calls, I suppose, *sharpening his tools*. He's made up his mind long ago to have out of you all he gave you, and a little more besides. Why, what did you get up for in the chapel? Didn't he say it was to bring a charge against Smith? Why, what do you know of Smith? Can't you see, with half an eye, he's been feeding of you to do his dirty work; and, if you had turned out well, wouldn't it have been cheap to him at the price?"

"What is it," said I, "you propose to do to-morrow?"

"To take a walk; that's all. Don't ask questions. If you go with me, I'll satisfy your doubts."

"Surely," said I, "his congregation must have known this; and they would not have permitted him——"

"Ah, my dear sir, you don't know human nature! Wait till you have lived as long as I have. Now, there's my wife; she knows as much as I do about the man, and yet I'm blowed if she doesn't seem to like him all the better for it! She calls him a chosen vessel, and only wishes I was half as sure of salvation. As for the congregation, they are a complete set of chosen vessels together, and the more you blow 'em up, the better the vessels like it. If what they call the world didn't speak agin 'em, they'd be afraid they were going wrong. So you never can offend them."

Thompson continued in the same strain for the rest of the evening, bringing charge after charge against the minister, with the view of proving him to be a hypocrite of the deepest dye. As he had fostered and protected me, Thompson explained that he had previously maintained and trained up Smith, whom he never would have deserted had all his speculations issued favourably. The loss of his money had so enraged him, that his feelings had suddenly taken a different direction, and he would now not stop until he had thoroughly effected the poor man's ruin. He (Thompson) knew Smith well; he had seen his books; and the man was as innocent of fraud as a child unborn. Clayton knew it very well, and the trick of examining the books was all a fudge. "That precious pair of brothers, Buster and Tomkins, knew very well what they were about, and would make it turn out right for the minister somehow. As for himself, he stood up for the fellow because he hadn't another friend in the place. He knew he should be kicked out for his pains; but that would be more agreeable than otherways." From all I gathered from Thompson, it appeared that the pitiable man—the audacious minister of God—was the slave of one of the most corroding passions that ever made shipwreck of the heart of man. *The love of money* absorbed or made subservient every other sentiment. To heap up riches there was no labour too painful, no means too vicious, no conduct too unjustifiable. The graces of earth, the virtues of heaven, were made to minister to the lust, and to conceal the demon behind the brightness and the beauty of their forms. There is no limit to the moral baseness of the man of avarice. There was none with Mr. Clayton. He lived to accumulate. Mr. Clayton was a scholar, a man of refinement, eloquent—an angel not more winning: he was self-denying in his appetites, humble, patient—powerful and beautiful in expression, when the vices of men compelled the unwilling invective. He was, to the eyes of men, studious and holy as an anchorite. But,

better than his own immortal soul, he loved and doated upon *gold!* That love acknowledged, fed, and gratified, when are its demands appeased?—when does conscience raise a barrier against its further progress? It is a state difficult to believe. Could I have listened with an ear of credulity to the tale of Thompson—could I have borne to listen to it with patience, had I not witnessed an act of turpitude that ocular demonstration could only render credible—had I not been prepared for that act by the tone, the manner, the expressions of the minister, when we passed an hour together, ignorant of each other's presence? It was a dreadful conviction that was forced upon me, and as wonderful as terrible. Self-delusion, for such it was, so perfect and complete, who could conceive—hypocrisy so super-eminent, who could conjecture! There was something, however, to be disclosed on the succeeding day. Thompson was very mysterious about this. He would give no clue to what he designed. I should judge from what I saw of the truth of his communications. Alas! I had seen enough already to mourn over the most melancholy overthrow that had ever crushed the confidence, and bruised the feelings, of ingenuous youth.

I passed a restless and unhappy night. Miserable dreams distressed me. I dreamt that I was sentenced to death for perjury—that the gallows was erected—and that Buster and Tomkins were my executioners. The latter was cruelly polite and attentive in his demeanour. He put the rope round my neck with an air of cutting civility, and apologised for the whole proceeding. I experienced vividly the moment of being turned off. I suffered the horrors of strangulation. The noose slipped, and I was dangling in the air in excruciating agony, half-dead and half-alive. Buster rushed to the foot of the scaffold, and with Christian charity fastened himself to my legs, and hung there till I had breathed my last. Whilst he was thus suspended, he sang one of his favourite hymns with his own rich and effective nasal vigour. Then I dreamt I was murdering Bunyan Smith in his sleep; Mr. Clayton was pushing me forward, and urging a dagger into my hand. Just as I had killed him I was knocked down by Thompson, and Clayton ran off laughing. Then I woke up, thank Heaven! more frightened than hurt, with every limb in my body sore and aching. Then, instead of going to sleep again, which I could not do, I lay awake, and reflected on what had taken place; and I thought all I had heard against Mr. Clayton, and all I had seen in the chapel, was a dream, like the execution and the murder. One thing seemed just as real and as likely as the other. Then I became uneasy in my bed, got up, and walked about the room, and wondered what in the world I should do, if Mr. Clayton deprived me of my situation, and I was thrown out of bread again. Then I recollected his many hints concerning fidelity and friendship, and what he had said about my being in no danger so long as I was faithful, and the rest of it; and then I wished I had thrown myself over Blackfriars' Bridge as I had intended, and so put an end to all the trials that beset my path.

Thompson came early on the following day, punctual to his appointment. He was accompanied by poor Bunyan Smith, and a voluminous statement of his affairs. I looked over them as well as I was able; for the unfortunate man was all excitement, and, faithful to the description of Thompson, sanguine in the extreme. He interrupted me twenty times, and, as every new speculation turned up, had still something to say why it had not succeeded according to his wishes. Although he had failed in every grand experiment, there was not one which would not have realised his hopes a hundredfold, but for the occurrence of some unfortunate event which it was impossible to foresee, but which could not possibly take place again, had he but money to renew his trials. His bankruptcy had not

subdued him, nor in the least diminished his belief in the efficacy of his great discoveries. There was certainly no appearance of fraud in the account of his transactions; but it was not Mr. Smith's innocence I was anxious to establish. It was the known guilt of Mr. Clayton that I would have made any sacrifice to remove.

It was in the afternoon that Thompson and I were walking along the well-filled pavement of Cheapside, on our way to what he called "the best witness he could bring to speak in favour of all that he had said about the minister." He still persisted in keeping up a mystery in respect of this same witness. "He might be, after all," he said, "mistaken in the thing, and he didn't wish to be made a fool of. I don't expect I shall, but we shall see." We reached Cornhill, and were opposite the Exchange.

"That's a rum place, isn't it?" asked Thompson, looking at the building —"Have you ever been inside?"

"Never," I replied.

"Suppose we just stroll in then? What a row they are kicking up there! And what a crowd! There's hardly room to move."

The area was, as he said, crowded. There was a loud continued murmur of human voices. Traffic was intense, and had reached what might be supposed its acme. It seemed as if business was undergoing a paroxysm, or fit, rather than pursuing her steady, healthful course. Bodies of men were standing in groups—some were darting from corner to corner, pen in mouth—a few were walking leisurely with downcast looks—others quickly, uneasy and excited. A stout and well-contented gentleman or two leaned against the high pillars of the building, and formed the centre of a human circle, that smiled as he smiled, and stopped when he stopped.

"Nice place to study in, sir," said Thompson, as we walked along.

I smiled.

"I mean it though," said he. "I see a man now that comes here on purpose to study—as clever a man at his books as ever I saw, and as fine a fellow to talk as you know—there, just look across the road—under that pillar—near the archway. There, just where them two men has left a open space. Tell me, who do you see there, sir?"

"Why, MR. CLAYTON!" I replied, astonished at the sight.

"Yes, and if you'll come here every day of your life, there you'll find him. I've watched him often, since Smith first put me up to his tricks, and I have never missed him. There he is making money, and wearing his soul out because he can't make half enough to satisfy his greedy maw. His covetousness is awful. There's nothing that he doesn't spekylate in; there's hardly a man of business in his congregation that he doesn't, either by himself or others, lend money out at usury. I mean such on 'em as he knows are right; for catch him, if he knows it, trusting the rotten brothers. Smith says he has got something to do with every one of the stocks. I don't know whether that is anything to eat and drink or not; but I think they call this here bear-garden the Stock Exchange, and in this neighbourhood the out-and-outer spends more than half his days." Whilst Thompson spoke, one of the two men, whom I have mentioned as being for many hours together closeted with the minister in his private study, and whom I set down as missionaries—came up in great haste to Mr. Clayton, and communicated to him news, apparently of importance. The latter immediately produced a pocket-book, in which he wrote a few words with a pencil, and the individual departed. The information, whatever it may have been, had deeply affected the man to whom it had been brought. He did not stand still, as before, but walked nervously about, looked pale, care-worn, and miserably anxious. He referred to his

book a dozen times—restored it frequently to his pocket, and had it out again immediately for surer satisfaction, or for further calculations. In about ten minutes, "*the missionary*" returned. This time he was the bearer of a better tale. The minister smiled—his brow expanded, and his eye had the vivacity and fire that belonged to it in the pulpit. Another memorandum was written in the pocket-book, and the two gentlemen walked quickly, and side by side, along the covered avenue. I had seen sufficient.

"Let us go," I said to Thompson.

"Why, you don't mean to say you have had enough?" returned he; "oh, wait a bit, and see the other boy! They make a precious trio."

I declined to witness the melancholy spectacle any longer. I was oppressed, grieved, and sickened, and turned away.

Thompson was delighted at the result of our "voyage of discovery," and continued to be facetious at the expense of the unhappy minister. I implored him to desist.

"Say no more, Thompson. This is no subject for laughter. I have suffered much since your brother carried me to Birmingham. This is the hardest blow yet. I believe now that all is a dream. This is not Mr. Clayton. It is a cheat of Satan. We are deluded and made fools in the hands of the Wicked One.

"You'll excuse me, sir," said Thompson; "but if I didn't know you better, I should say, to hear you talk in that uncommonly queer way, that you were as big a wessel as any of 'em. Don't flatter yourself you are dreaming, when you never were wider awake in all your life."

It is perhaps needless to say, that I had no heart to present myself again before my friend and benefactor—the once beloved and still deeply compassionated minister of religion. I avoided the house of Mr. Clayton, and absented myself from his chapel. But I was not content with the first view that had been afforded me at the Exchange. I was unwilling to decide for ever upon the character of my former friend without a complete self-justification. I went again to the house of commerce, and alone. Again I beheld Mr. Clayton immersed in the doings of the place. For a week I continued my observation. Proofs of his worldliness and gross hypocrisy came fast and thick upon each other. I no longer doubted the statement of Thompson and the speculator Smith. I resolved upon seeing my preserver no more. I could not think of him without shuddering, and I endeavoured to forget him. One evening, about ten days after the chapel scene, sitting alone in my apartment, I was attracted by a slight movement on the stairs. A moment afterwards there was a knock at my door. The door opened, and Mr. Clayton himself walked into the room. I trembled instantly from head to foot. The minister had a serious countenance, and was very placid. He took a chair, and I waited till he spoke.

"You have not visited me of late, Caleb," he began. "You have surely forgotten me. You have forgotten your promise—our friendship—your obligations—gratitude—everything. How is this?"

Still I did not speak.

"Tell me," he continued, "who has taught you to become a spy? Who has taught you that it is honourable and just to track the movements and to break upon the privacy of others? I saw you in the Exchange this morning—I saw you yesterday—and the day before. Tell me, what took you there?"

I gave no answer.

"Your Bible, Caleb, gives no encouragement to the feeling which has

prompted you to act thus. You have read the word of truth imperfectly. There is a holiness—a peculiar sanctity——"

"For Heaven's sake, Mr. Clayton," I cried out, interrupting him, "do not talk so! Do not deceive yourself. Do not attempt to bewilder me. Do not provoke the wrath of Heaven. You have been kinder to me than I can express. The recollection of what you have done is ever present to me. Oh, would that I owed you nothing! Would that I could pay you back to the last farthing, and that the past could be obliterated from my mind! I would have parted with my life willingly, gladly, to serve you. Had you been poor, how delightful would it have been to labour for my benefactor! I will not deceive you. I have learned everything. Whom can I trust now? Whom shall I believe? To whom attach myself? Mr. Clayton, it seems incredible to me that I can talk thus to you. It is indeed, and I tremble as I do so. But what is to be done? I can respect you no longer, however my poor heart throbs towards you, and pities——"

I burst into tears.

"Spare your pity, boy," said Mr. Clayton, coldly, "and spare those hollow tears. You acknowledge that there exists a debt between us. Well, have you attempted to repay it? Listen to me. I have been your friend. I am willing to remain so. Come to me as before, and you shall find me as I have ever been—affectionate and kind. Avoid me—place yourself in the condition of my opponent, and *beware*. In a moment, by one word, I can throw you back into the slough from whence I dragged you. To-morrow morning, if I so will it, you shall wander forth again, an outcast, depending for your bread upon a road-side charity. It is a dreadful thing to walk a marked and branded man through this cold world; yet it is only for me to say the word, and *infamy* is attached to your name for ever. And what greater crime exists than black ingratitude? It is our duty to expose and punish it. It is for you to make the choice. If you are wise, you will not hesitate. If Christianity has worked——"

"Sir, what has *Christianity* to do with this? Satan must witness the compact that you would have us make. I cannot sell myself!"

"Your new companions have taught you these fine phrases, Caleb. They will support you, no doubt, and you will remain faithful to them, until a fresh acquaintance shall poison your ear against them, as they have corrupted it to win you from the man whom you have sworn to serve. I have nothing more to say. You promised to be faithful through good report and evil. You have broken your word. I forgive you, if you are sorry for the fault, and my arms are ready to receive you. Punishment shall follow—strict justice, and no mercy—if you persist in evil. Within a week present yourself at my abode, and everything is forgotten and forgiven. I am your friend for ever. Do not come, be obstinate and unyielding, and prepare yourself for misery."

The minister left me. The week elapsed, and at the end of it I had not presented myself at his residence. But, in the meanwhile, I had been active in taking measures for the security of the office which I held, and whose duties I had hitherto performed to the perfect satisfaction of my employers. I had been given to understand that it remained with Mr. Bombasty to continue my appointment, or to dismiss me at once; that he was in the hands of Mr. Clayton; and that if the latter desired my dismissal, and could bring against me the shadow of a complaint to justify Mr. Bombasty in the eye of the society, nothing could save me from ejection. It was proposed to me by a fellow-servant of the society, to place myself as soon as possible beyond the reach and influence of Mr.

Clayton. He advised me to secede at once from the church, and to attach myself to another, professing the same principles, and, like that, in connexion with the society. By this means, Clayton and I would be separated, and his power over me effectually removed. Exclusion was to me starvation, and I eagerly adopted the counsel of my companion. To be, however, in a condition to join another church, it was necessary to procure, either by personal application, or at the instance of the minister of the new church, *a letter of dismission*, which letter should contain an assurance of the candidate's previous good conduct and present qualification. In my case, the minister himself proposed to apply for my testimonials. He did apply, and at the end of a month no answer had been returned to his communication. He wrote a second, and the second application met with no greater respect than the first. At length I received a very formal and polite letter from Mr. Tomkins, informing me that "a church meeting had been convened for the purpose of considering the propriety of affording Brother Stukely the opportunity of joining another connexion, by granting him a letter of dismission," and that my presence was requested on that very important occasion.

If there was one thing upon earth more than another which at this particular time of my life I abominated with unmitigated and ineffable disgust, it was the frequent recurrence of these eternal church meetings. Nothing, however trifling, could be carried forward without them; no man's affairs, however private and worldly, were too uninteresting for their investigation. My connexion with the church had hardly commenced before two had taken place, principally on my account, and now a third was proposed, in order to enable the minister to write a letter of civility, and to state the simple fact of my having conducted myself with propriety and decorum. Still it was proper that I should attend it. I did so, accompanied by Thompson, and a crowded assembly, as befitted the occasion, welcomed us amongst them with many short coughs and much suppressed hissing. There was the usual routine. The hymn, the portion of Scripture, and the prayer of Brother Buster. In the latter, there were many dark hints intended to be appropriate to my case, and which were, to all appearance, well understood by the congregation at large. They did not frighten me. I was guilty of no crime against their church. They could bring no charge against me. The prayer concluded, Mr. Clayton coldly requested me to retire. I did so. I passed into the vestry, which was separated from the main building by a very thin partition, that enabled me to hear every word spoken in the chapel. Mr. Clayton began. He introduced his subject by lamenting, in the most feeling terms, the unhappy state of the brother who had just departed from the congregation—(the crocodile weeping over the fate of the doomed wretch he was about to destroy!). He had hoped great things of him. He had believed him to be a child of God. It was not for him to judge their brother now; but this was a world of disappointment, and the fairest hopes were blasted, even as the rose withereth beneath the canker. They all knew—it was not for him to disguise or hide the fact—that their brother had not realised the ardent expectations that one and all had formed of him. Their brother himself carried about with him this miserable consciousness; and under such circumstances it was that he proposed to withdraw from their communion, and to receive a dismission that should entitle him to a seat elsewhere. It was for them to consider how far they were justified in complying with his request. As for himself, he was sorely distressed in spirit. His carnal heart urged him to listen to the desire of his brother in the flesh, and that heart warred with his

spiritual conviction. To be charitable was one thing, to involve one's self in guilt, to encourage sinfulness, and to reward backsliding—oh, surely, this was another! He had no right in his high capacity to indulge a personal affection. It was his glory that he could sacrifice it at the call of duty. Accordingly, in the answer to the application that he had received, he had humbly attempted rather to embody the views of the church, than the suggestions of his own weak bosom. That answer he would now submit to them, and their voice must pronounce upon its justice. He did not fear for them. They were highly privileged; they had been wonderfully directed hitherto, and they would, adorned as they were with humility and faith, be directed even unto the end.

"Ha-men!" responded Buster very audibly, and the minister forthwith proceeded to his letter.

It was my honour to be represented in it as a person but too likely to disturb the peace of any church; whose conduct, however exemplary on my first joining the congregation, had lately been such as to give great reason to fear that I had been suddenly deprived of all godliness and grace; who had caused the brethren great pain; and whom recent circumstances had especially rendered an object of suspicion and alarm. There was much more to the same effect. There was no distinct charge—nothing tangible, or of which I could defy them to the proof. All was dark doubt and murderous innuendo. There was nothing for which I could claim relief from the laws of my country—more than enough to complete my ruin. I burned with anger and indignation; forgot everything but the cold-blooded designs of the minister; and, stung to action by the imminent danger in which I stood, I rushed at once from the vestry into the midst of the congregation. Thompson was already on his legs, and had ventured something on my behalf, which had been drowned in loud and universal clamour. Silence was, in a measure, restored by my appearance, and I took the opportunity to demand from the minister a perusal of the letter that had just been read.

He scowled upon me with a natural hate, and refused to comply with my request.

"What!" I asked aloud, "am I denied the privilege that is extended to the vilest of his species? Will you condemn me unheard? Accuse me in my absence—keep me in ignorance of my charge—and stab me in the dark?"

I received no answer, and then I turned to the congregation. I implored them—little knowing the men to whom I trusted my appeal—to save me from the persecution of a man who had resolved upon my downfall. I asked nothing from them, from him, but the liberty of gaining, by daily labour, an honourable subsistence. Would they deny it me?——"

I was interrupted by groans and hisses, and loud cries of "Yes, yes!" from Brother Buster.

I addressed the minister again.

"Mr. Clayton," said I, "beware how you tread me down. Beware how you drive me to desperation. Cruel, heartless man! What have I done that you should follow me with this relentless spite? Can you sleep? Can you walk and live without the fear of a punishment adequate to your offence? Let me go. Be satisfied that I possess the power of exposing unheard-of turpitude and hypocrisy, and that I refrain from using it. Dismiss me; let me leave your sight for ever, and you are safe—for me."

"Viper!" exclaimed the minister, rising in his seat, "whom I have warmed and nourished in my bosom; viper! whom I took to my hearth, and kept there till the returning sense of life gave vigour to your blood

and fresh venom to your sting! Is it thus you pay me back for food and raiment—thus you heap upon me the expressions of a glowing gratitude! —with threats and deadly accusations? Spit forth your malice! Pile up falsehoods to the skies!—WHO WILL BELIEVE THE TALE OF PROBABILITY? Brethren! behold the man whose cause I pleaded with you—for whom my feelings had well nigh mastered my better judgment. Behold him, and learn how hard it is to pierce the stony heart of him whose youth has passed in dissolute living and in adultery. Shall I approach thy ear with the voice of her who cries from the grave for justice on her seducer? Look, my beloved, on the man whom I found discarded by mankind, friendless and naked, whom I clothed and fostered, and whom I brought in confidence amongst you. Look at him, and, oh, be warned!"

The hissing and groaning were redoubled. Thompson rose a dozen times to speak, but a volley assailed him on each occasion, and he was obliged to resume his seat. He grew irritated and violent; and at length, when the public disapprobation had reached its height, and for the twenty-and-first time had cut short his address almost before he spoke, unable to contain himself any longer, he uttered at the top of his stentorian voice a fearful imprecation, and recommended to the care of a gentleman who had more to do with that society than was generally supposed Mr. Clayton, and every individual brother in the congregation.

Jabez Buster, after looking to the ceiling, and satisfying himself that it had not fallen in, rose, dreadfully distressed.

"He had lived," he said, "to see sich sights and hear sich language as had made his nature groan within him. He could only compare their beloved minister to one of them there ancient martyrs who had died for conscience' sake before Smithfield was a cattle-market; but he hoped he would have strength for the conflict, and that the congregation would help him to fight the good fight. He called upon 'em all now to do their duty, to exclude and excommunicate for ever the unrighteous brethren—and to make them over to Satan without further delay."

The shout with which the proposition was received decided the fate of poor Thompson and myself. It was hardly submitted, before it was carried *nemine contradicente;* and, immediately afterwards, Thompson buttoned his coat in disgust, and was hooted out of the assembly. I followed him.

PART XII.

SAINTS AND SINNERS.

"Whatever shocks, or gives the least offence
To virtue, delicacy, truth, or sense,
(Try the criterion, 'tis a faithful guide,)
Nor has, nor can have, Scripture on its side."

COWPER.

ONE of the first consequences of my unlooked-for meeting with the faithful Thompson, was the repayment of the five shillings which he had so generously spared me when I was about to leave him for Birmingham without

as many pence in my scrip. During my absence, however, fortune had placed my honest friend in a new relation to a sum of this value. Five shillings were not to him, as before, sixty pence. The proprietor of the house in which he lived, and which he had found it so difficult to let out to his satisfaction, had died suddenly, and had thought proper to bequeath to his tenant the bulk of his property, amounting, perhaps, to five thousand pounds. Thompson, who was an upholsterer by trade, left the workshop in which he was employed as journeyman immediately, and began to work upon his own account. He was a prosperous and a thriving man when I rejoined him. His manner was, as the reader has seen, kind and straightforward as ever, and the only change that his wealth had wrought in him, was that which gold may be supposed to work in a heart alive to its duties, simple and honest in its intentions, and lacking only the means to make known its strong desire of usefulness. His generosity had kept pace with his success; his good wishes outstripped both. His home was finer, yet scarcely more sightly and happier than the one large room, which, with its complement of ten children, sire and dame, had still a nook for the needy and friendless stranger. The old house had been made over for a twelvemonth to the various tenants, free of all charge. At the end of that period it was the intention of Thompson to pull it down, and build a better in its place. A young widow, with her three orphans, lodged on the attic floor, and the grateful prayers of the four went far to establish the buoyancy of the landlord's spirit, and to maintain the smile that seldom departed from his manly cheek. Well might the poor creature, whom I once visited in her happy lodging, talk of the sin of destroying so comfortable a residence, and feel assured, that "let them build a palace, they would never equal the present house, or make a sleeping-room where a body might rest so peacefully and well." Thompson's mode of life had scarcely varied. He was not idle amongst his men. When labour was suspended, he was with his children; another had been added to the number, and there were now eleven to relieve him of the superabundant profits created in the manufactory. Mrs. Thompson was still a noble housewife, worthy of her husband. All was care, cleanliness, and economy at home. Griping stint would never have been tolerated by the hospitable master, and virtuous plenty only was admitted by the prudent wife. Had there been a oneness in the religious views of this good couple, *Paradise* would have been a word fit to write beneath the board that made known to men John Thompson's occupation; but this, alas! was wanting to complete a scene that otherwise looked rather like perfection. The great enemy of man seeks in many ways to defeat the benevolent aims of Providence. Thompson had remained at home one Sunday afternoon to smoke a friendly pipe with an old acquaintance, when he should have gone to church. His wife set out alone. Satan took advantage of her husband's absence, drew her to chapel, and made her—a *dissenter*. This was Thompson's statement of the case, and severer punishment, he insisted, had never been inflicted on a man for Sabbath-breaking.

Dismissed, as I expected, by Mr. Bombasty, it was a natural step to walk towards the abode of the upholsterer. I knew his hour for supper, and his long hour after that for ale, and pipe, and recreation. I was not in doubt as to my welcome. Mrs. Thompson had given me a general invitation to supper, "because," she said, "it did Thompson good to chat after a hard day's work;" and the respected Thompson himself had especially invited me to the long hour afterwards, "because," he added, "it did the ale and 'baccy good, who liked it so much better to go out of this here wicked world in company." About seven o'clock in the evening I found

myself under their hospitable roof, seated in the room devoted to the general purposes of the house. It was large, and comfortably furnished. The walls were of wainscot, painted white, and were graced with two paintings. One, a family group, consisting of Thompson, wife, and eight children, most wretchedly executed, was the production of a slowly rising artist, a former lodger of my friend's, who had contrived to compound with his easy landlord for two years and three quarters' rent with this striking display of his ability. Thompson was prouder of this picture than of the originals themselves, if that were possible. The design had been his own, and had cost him, as he was ready and even anxious to acknowledge, more time and trouble than he had ever given before, or meant to give again, to any luxury in life. The artist, as I was informed, had endeavoured to reduce to form some fifty different schemes that had arisen in poor Thompson's brain, but had failed in every one, so difficult he found it to introduce the thousand and one effects that the landlord deemed essential to the subject. His first idea had been to bring upon the canvas every feature of his life from boyhood upwards. This being impracticable, he wished to bargain for at least the workshop and the private residence. The lodgers, he thought, might come into the background well, and the tools, peeping from a basket in the corner, would look so much like life and nature. The upshot of his plans was the existing work of art, which Thompson considered matchless, and pronounced "dirt cheap, if he had even given the fellow a seven years' lease of the entire premises." The situations were striking certainly. In the centre of the picture were two high chairs, on which were seated, as grave as judges, the heads of the establishment. They sat there, drawn to their full height, too dignified to look at one another, and yet displaying a fond attachment, by a joining of the hands. The youngest child had clambered to the father's knee, and, with a chisel, was digging at his nose, wonderful to say, without disturbing the stoic equanimity that had settled on the father's face. This was the favourite son. Another, with a plane larger than himself, was menacing the mother's knee. The remaining six had each a tool, and served in various ways to effect most artfully the beloved purpose of the vain upholsterer's heart—viz. the introduction of the entire workshop. The second painting in the centre of the opposite wall represented Mr. Clayton. The likeness was a failure, and the colours were coarse and glaring; but there needed no instruction to know that the carefully-framed production attempted to pourtray the unenviable man, who, in spite of his immorality and shameless life, was still revered and idolised by the blind disciples who had taken him for their guide. This portrait was Mrs. Thompson's peculiar property. There were no other articles of *vertu* in the spacious apartment; but cleanliness and decorum bestowed upon it a grace, the absence of which no idle decoration could supply. Early as the hour was, a saucepan was on the fire, whose bubbling water was busy with the supper that at half-past eight must meet the assault of many knives and forks. John Thompson and two sons—the eldest—were working in the shop. They had been there with little intermission since six that morning. The honest man was fond of work; so was he of his children—yes, dearly fond of *them*, and they must share with him the evening meal; and he must have them all about him; and he must help them all, and see them eat, and look with manly joy and pride upon the noisy youngsters, for whom his lusty arm had earned the bread that came like manna to him—so wholesome and so sweet! Three girls, humbly but neatly dressed, the three first steps of this great human ladder, were seated at a table administering to the necessities of sundry shirts and

stockings that had suffered sensibly in their last week's struggle through the world. *They* were indeed a picture worth the looking at. You grew a better man in gazing on their innocence and industry. What a lesson stole from their quiet and contented looks, their patient perseverance, their sweet unity! How shining smooth the faces, how healthy and how round, and how impossible it seemed for wrinkles ever to disturb the fine and glossy surface! Modesty never should forsake the humble; the bosom of the lowly-born should be her home. Here she had enshrined herself, and given to simplicity all her dignity and truth. They worked and worked on; who should tell which was the most assiduous—which the fairest—which the most eager and successful to increase the happiness of all! And turn to Billy there, that half-tamed urchin! that likeness in little of his sire, rocking, not so much against his will as against conviction, the last of all the Thompsons—a six months' infant in the wicker cradle. How, obedient to his mother's wish, like a little man at first, he rocks with all his might, and then irregularly, and at long intervals—by fits and starts—and ceases altogether very soon, bobbing his curly head, and falling gently into a deep mesmeric sleep. The older lads are making wooden boats, and two, still older, stand on either side their mother. A book is in the hands of each, full of instruction and fine learning. It was the source of all their knowledge, the cause of all their earliest woes. Good Mrs. Thompson had been neglected as a child, and was enthusiastic in the cause of early education. Sometimes they looked into the book, but oftener still they cast attentive eyes upon the fire, as if "the book of knowledge fair" was there displayed, and not a noisy saucepan, almost unable to contain itself for joy of the cod's head and shoulders that must be ready by John Thompson's supper-time. The whole family were my friends —with the boys I was on terms of warmest intimacy, and smiles and nods, and shouts and cheers, welcomed me amongst them.

"Now, close your book, Bob," said the mother, soon after I was seated, "and, Alec, give me yours. Put your hands down, turn from the fire, and look up at me, dears. What is the capital of Russia?"

"The Birman empire!" said Alec, with unhesitating confidence.

"The Baltic sea!" cried Bob, emulous and ardent.

"Wait—not so fast; let me see, my dears, which of you is right."

Mrs. Thompson appealed immediately to her book, after a long and private communication with which, she emphatically pronounced both now wrong.

"Give us a chance, mother," said Bob, in a wheedling tone (Bob knew his mother's weaknesses). "Them's such hard words. I don't know how it is, but I never can remember 'em. Just tell us the first syllable—oh, do now—please!"

"Oh, I know now!" cried Alec. "It's something with a G in it."

"Think of the apostles, dears. What are the name of the apostles?"

"Why, there's Moses," began Bob, counting on his fingers, "and there's Sammywell, and there's Aaron, and Noah's ark——"

"Stop, my dear," said Mrs. Thompson, who was very busy with her manual, and contriving a method of rendering a solution of her question easy. "Just begin again. I said—who was Peter—no, not that—who was an apostle?"

"Oh, I know now!" cried Alec again (Alec was the sharp boy of the family). "It's Peter. Peter's the capital of Russia!"

"No, not quite, my dear. You are very warm—very warm indeed, but not quite hot. Try again."

"Paul," half murmured Robert, with a reckless hope of proving right.

"No, Peter's right; but there's something else. What has your father been taking down the beds for?"

There was a solemn silence, and the three industrious sisters blushed the faintest blush that could be raised upon a maiden's cheek.

"To rub that stuff upon the walls," said the ready Alec.

"Yes, but what was it to kill?" continued the instructress.

"The fleas," said Bob.

"Worse than that, my dear."

"Oh, I know now!" shrieked Alec for the third time. "*Petersbug's* the capital of Russia!"

Mrs. Thompson looked at me with pardonable vanity and triumph, and I bestowed upon the successful students a few comfits which I had purchased on my road for my numerous and comfit-loving friends. The mere sight of this sweet "reward of merit" immediately inspired the two boys at work upon the boats with a desire for knowledge, and especially for learning the capitals of countries, that was most agreeable to contemplate. The lesson was continued, more to my amusement, I fear, than the edification of the pupils. The boys were unable to answer a single question until they had had so many *chances*, and had become so very *hot*, that not to have answered at length would have bordered on the miraculous. The persevering governess was not displeased at this; for she would not have lost the opportunity of displaying her own skill in metaphorical illustration for a great deal, I am very sure. The clock struck eight; there was a general movement. The three sisters folded their work, and lodged it carefully in separate drawers. The eldest then produced the table-cloth, knives, forks, and spoons. The second exhibited bibs and pinafores; and the third brought from their hiding-places a dozen modest chairs, and placed them round the table. Bob assured the company "he was *so* hungry;" Alec said, "so was he;" and the boatmen, in an under tone, settled what should be done with the great cod's eyes, which, they contended, were the best parts of the fish, and "shouldn't they be glad if father would give 'em one a-piece!" The good woman must enquire, of course, how nearly the much-relished dainty had reached the critical and interesting state when it became most palatable to John Thompson; for John Thompson was an epicure, "and must have his little bits of things done to a charm, or not at all." Half-past eight had struck. The family were bibbed and pinafored; the easy coat and slippers were at the fire, and warmed through and through—it was a season of intenseness. "Here's father!" shouted Alec, and all the bibs and pinafores rushed like a torrent to the door. Which shall the father catch into his ready arms, which kiss, which hug, which answer?—all are upon him; they know their playmate, their companion and best friend; they have hoarded up, since the preceding night, a hundred things to say, and now they have got their loving and attentive listener. "Look what I have done, father," says the chief boatman, "Tom and I together." "Well done, boys!" says the father—and Tom and he are kissed. "I have been rocking baby," lisps little Billy, who, in return, gets rocked himself. "Father, what's the capital of Russia?" shrieks Alec, tugging at his coat. "What do you mean, you dog?" is the reply, accompanied by a hearty shake of his long flaxen hair. "Petersbug!" cry Tom and Alec both, following him to the hearth, each one endeavouring to relieve him of his boots as soon as he is seated there. The family circle is completed. The flaky fish is ready, and presented for inspection. The father has served them all, even to little Billy—their plates are full and smoking. "Mother" is called upon to ask a blessing. She rises, and assumes the looks of

Jabez Buster—twenty blessings might be asked and granted in half the time she takes—so think and look Bob, Alec, and the boatmen; but at length she pauses—the word is given, and further ceremony is dispensed with. In childhood, supper is a thing to look forward to, and to *last* when it arrives; but not in childhood, any more than in old age, can sublunary joys endure for ever. The meal is finished. A short half hour flies, like lightning, by. The children gather round their father; and in the name of all, upon his knees, he thanks his God for all the mercies of the day. Thompson is no orator. His heart is warm; his words are few and simple. The three attendant graces take charge of their brethren, detach them from their father's side, and conduct them to their beds. Happy father! happy children! May Providence be merciful, and keep the grim enemy away from your fireside! Let him not come now in the blooming beauty and the freshness of your loves! Let him not darken and embitter for ever the life that is still bright, beautiful, and glorious in the power of elevating and sustaining thought that leads beyond it. Let him wait the matured and not unexpected hour, when the shock comes, not to crush, to overwhelm, and to annihilate, but to warn, to teach, and to encourage; not to alarm and stagger the untaught spirit, but to bring to the subdued and long-tried soul its last lesson on the vanity and evanescence of its early dreams!

It is half-past nine o'clock. Thompson, his wife, and two eldest boys are present, and, for the first time, I have an opportunity to make known the object of my visit.

"And so they have turned you off," said Thompson, when I had finished. "And who's surprised at that? Not I, for one. Missus," continued he, turning to his wife, "why haven't you got a curtain yet for that 'ere pictur? I can't a-bear the sight of it."

Mrs. Thompson looked plaintively towards the painting, and heaved a sigh.

"Ah, dear good man! He has got his enemies," said she.

"Mrs. Thompson!" exclaimed her husband, "I have done with that good man from this day for'ards; and I do hope, old 'ooman, that you'll go next Sunday to church with me, as we used to do afore you got that pictur painted."

"It's no good talking, Thompson," answered the lady, positively and firmly. "I can't sit under a cold man, and there's an end of it."

"There, that's the way you talk, missus."

"Why, you know, Thompson, everything in the church is cold."

"No, not now, my dear—they've put up a large stove. You'll recollect you haven't been lately."

"Besides, do you think I can sit in a place of worship, and hear a man say '*Let us pray*' in the middle of the service, making a fool of one, as if we hadn't been praying all the time? As that dear and persecuted saint says (turning to the picture), it's a common assault to our understandings."

"Now, Polly, that's just always how you go off. If you'd only listen to reason, that could all be made out right in no time. The clergyman doesn't mean to say *Let us pray* because he hasn't been praying afore; —what he means is—we have been praying all this time, and so we'll go on praying again—no, not again exactly—but don't leave off. That isn't what I mean, either. Let me see—*Let us pray*. Oh, yes! Why—stay. Where is it he does say *Let us pray?* There, I say, Stukely, you know it all much better than I do. Just make it right to the missus."

"It is not difficult," said I.

THE THOMPSONS IN THEIR GLORY.

"Oh, no, Mr. Stukely, I dare say not!" added Mrs. Thompson, interrupting me. "Mr. Clayton says, Satan has got his janysarries abroad, and has a reason for everything. It is very proper to say, too, I suppose, that it is an *imposition* when the bishops ordain the ministers? What a word to make use of! It's frightful!"

"Well, I'm blessed," exclaimed Thompson, "if I don't think you had better hold your tongue, old girl, about impositions; for sich oudacious robbers as your precious brothers is, I never come across since I was stopped that ere night, as we were courting, on Shooter's Hill! It's a system of imposition from beginning to end."

"Look to your Bible, Thompson; what does that say? Does that tell ministers to read their sermons? There can't be no truth and right feeling when a man puts down what he's going to say; the vital warmth is wanting, I'm sure. And then to read the same prayers Sunday after Sunday, till a body get's quite tired at hearing them over and over again, and finding nothing new! How can you improve an occasion if you are tied down in this sort of way."

"Did you ever see one of the brothers eat, Stukely?" asked Thompson, avoiding the main subject. "Don't you ask one of them to dinner—that's all. That nice boy Buster ought to eat for a wager. I had the pleasure of his company to dinner one fine afternoon. I don't mean to send him another invitation just yet, at all events."

"Yes," proceeded the fair, but stanch nonconformist: "what does the Bible say indeed! 'Take no thought of what you should say.' Why, in the church, I am told they are doing nothing else from Monday morning to Saturday night but writing the sermon they are going to read on the Sabbath. To *read* a sermon! What would the apostles say to that?"

"Why, didn't you tell me, my dear, that the gentleman as set for that pictur got all his sermons by heart before he preached 'em?"

"Of course I did—but that's a very different thing. Doesn't it all pour from him as natural as if it had come to him that minute? He doesn't fumble over a book like a schoolboy. His beautiful eyes, I warrant you, ain't looking down all the time, as if he was ashamed to hold 'em up. Isn't it a privilege to see his blessed eyes rolling all sorts of ways; and don't they speak wolumes to the poor benighted sinner? Besides, don't tell me, Thompson; we had better turn Catholics at once, if we are to have the minister dressing up like the Pope of Rome, and all the rest of it."

"You are the gal of my heart!" exclaimed the uxorious Thompson; "but I must say, you have got some of the disgracefulest notions out of that ere chapel as ever I heard on. Why, it's only common decency to wear a dress in the pulpit; and I believe in my mind, that that's come down to us from time immemorable, like everything else in human natur. What's your opinion, Stukely?"

"Yes; and what's your opinion, Mr. Stukely," added the lady immediately, "about calling a minister of the gospel—a *priest?* Is that Paperistical or not?"

"That isn't the pint, Polly," proceeded John. "We are talking about the dress. Let's have that out first."

"And then the absolution——"

"No, Poll. Stick to the dress."

"Ah, Thompson, it's always the way!" continued the mistress of the house, growing red and wroth, and heedless of the presence of the eager-listening children; "it's always the way. Satan is ruining of you. You'll laugh at the elect, and you'll not find your mistake out till it's too late to alter. Mr. Clayton says that the Establishment is the hothouse of devils;

and the more I see of its ways, the more I feel he is right. Thompson, you are in the sink of iniquity."

"Come, I can't stand no more of this," exclaimed Thompson, growing uneasy in his chair, but without a spark of ill-humour. Let's change the topic, old 'ooman; I'm sure it can't do the young uns any good to hear this idle talk. Let's teach 'em nothing at all, if we can't larn 'em something better than wrangling about religion. Now Jack," he continued, turning to his eldest boy, "what is the matter with you? What are you sitting there for with your mouth wide open?"

"What's the meaning of Paperist, father?" asked the boy, who had been long waiting to propose the question.

"What's that to you, you rascal?" was the reply; "mind your own business, my good fellow, and leave the Paperist to mind his'n; that's your father's maxim, who got it from his father before him. You'll learn to find fault with other people fast enough without my teaching you. I tell you what, Jack, if you look well after yourself, you'll find little time left to bother about others. If your hands are ever idle—recollect you have ten brothers and sisters. Look about you—you are the oldest boy—and see what you can do for them. Do you mind that?"

"Yes, father."

"Very well, old chap. Then just get out the bottle, and give your father something to coax the cod down. Poll, that fish won't settle."

The long hour was beginning. That bottle was the signal. A gin-and-water nightcap, on this occasion, officiated for the ale. Jack and his brother received a special invitation to a sip or two, which they at once unhesitatingly accepted. The sturdy fellows shook their father and fellow-labourer's hand, and were not loth to go to rest. Their mother was their attendant. The ruffle had departed from her face. It was as pleasant as before. She was but half a dissenter. So Thompson thought when he called her back again, and bade his "old 'ooman give her hubby one of her good old-fashioned busses, and think no more about it."

Thompson and I were left together.

"And what do you mean to do, sir, now?" was his first question.

"I hardly know," I answered.

"Of course, you'll cut the gang entirely—that's a nat'ral consequence."

"No, Thompson, not at present. I must not seem so fickle and inconstant. I must not seem so to myself. I joined this sect not altogether without deliberation. I must have further proof of the unsoundness of its principles. A few of its professors have been faithless even to their own position. Of what religious profession may not the same be said? I will be patient, and examine further."

"I was a-thinking," said Thompson musingly—"I was a-thinking, till you've got something else to do——but no, never mind, you won't like that."

"What is it?"

"Why, I was thinking about the young uns. They're shocking back'ard in their eddication, and, between you and me, the missus makes them back'arder. I don't understand the way she has got of larning 'em at all. I don't want to make scholards of 'em. Nobody would but a fool. Bless 'em, they'll have enough to do to get their bread with sweating and toiling, without addling their brains about things they can't understand. But it is a cruelty, mind you, for a parent to hinder his child from reading his Bible on a Sunday afternoon, and to make him stand ashamed of himself before his fellow workmen when he grows up, and finds that he can't put *paid* to a bill on a Saturday night. The boys should all know how to

read and write, and keep accounts, and a little summut of human nature. This is what I wants to give 'em, and nobody should I like better to put it into 'em than you, my old friend, if you'd just take the trouble 'till you've got something better to do."

"Thompson," I answered instantly, "I will do it with pleasure. I ought to have made the offer. It did not occur to me. I shall rejoice to repay you, in this trifling way, for all your good feeling and kindness."

"Oh, no!" answered my friend, "none of that. We must have an understanding. Don't you think I should have asked the question, if I meant to sneak out in that dirty sort of way. No, that won't do. It's very kind of you; but we must make all that right. We sha'n't quarrel, I dare say. If you mean you'll do it, I have only just a word or two to say before you begin."

"I shall be proud to serve you, Thompson, and on any terms you please."

"Well, it is a serving me—I don't deny it; but mind you, only till you have dropped into something worth your while. What I wish to say is as this:—As soon as ever my missus hears of what you are going to do, I know as well what she'll be at as I know what I am talking of now. She'll just be breaking my heart to have the boys larned French. Now, I'd just as soon bind 'em apprentice to that 'ere Clayton. I've seen too much of that 'ere sort of thing in my time. I'm as positive as I sit here, that when a chap begins to talk French he loses all his English spirit, and feels as like a mounseer as possible. I'm sure he does. I've seen it a hundred times, and that I couldn't a-bear. Besides, I've been told that French is the language the thieves talk, and I solemnly believe it. That's one thing. Now here's another. You'll excuse me, my dear fellow. In course you know more than I do; but I must say that you have got sometimes a very roundabout way of coming to the pint. I mean no offence, and I don't blame you. It's all along of the company you have kept. You are—it's the only fault you have got—you are oudaciously fond of hard words. Don't let the young uns larn 'em. That's all I have to say, and we'll talk of the pay some other time."

At this turn of the conversation, Thompson insisted upon my lighting a pipe and joining him in the gin-and-water. We smoked for many minutes in silence. My friend had unbuttoned his waistcoat, and had drawn the table nearer to his warm and hospitable fire. A log of wood was burning slowly and steadily away, and a small, bright—very bright—copper kettle overlooked it from the hob. My host had fixed his feet upon the fender—the unemployed hand was in his corduroys. His eyes were three parts closed, enjoying what from its origin may be called—a pure tobacco-born soliloquy. The smoke arose in thin white curls from the clay cup, and at regular periods stole blandly from the corner of his lips. The silent man was blessed. He had been happy at his work; he had grown happier as the sun went down; his happiness was ripening at the supper-table;—*now*, half asleep and half awake—half conscious and half dreaming—wholly free from care, and yet not free from pregnant thought—the labourer had reached the summit of felicity, and was at peace—intensely.

A few evenings only had elapsed after this interesting meeting, before I was again spending a delicious hour or two with the simple-hearted and generous upholsterer. There was something very winning in these moments snatched and secured from the hurricane of life, and passed in thorough and undisturbed enjoyment. My friend, notwithstanding that he had engaged my services, and was pleased to express his satisfaction at

the mode in which I rendered them, was yet alive to my interests, and too apprehensive of injuring them by keeping me away from loftier employment. He did not like my being *thrown out* of the chapel, especially after he had heard my determination not to forsake immediately the sect to which I had attached myself. He was indifferent to his own fate. His worldly prospects could not be injured by his expulsion; on the contrary, he slily assured me that "his neighbours would begin to think better of him, and give him credit for having become an honester and more trustworthy man." But with regard to myself it was a different thing. I should require "a character" at some time or another, and there was a body of men primed and ready to vilify and crush me. He advised me, whilst he acknowledged it was a hard thing to say, and "it went agin him to do it," to apply once more respectfully for my dismission. "It won't do," he pertinently said, "to bite your nose off to be revenged on your tongue." I was certainly in a mess, and must get out of it in the best way that I could. Buster and Tomkins had great power in *the Church*, and if I represented my case to either or both of them, he did hope they might be brought to consent not to injure me, or stand in the way of my getting bread. "In a quarrel," he said, in conclusion, "some one must give in. I was a young man, and had my way to make, and though he should despise hisself if he recommended me to do anything mean and dirty in the business, yet he thought, as the father of a numerous family, he ought to advise me to be civil, and to do the best for myself in this unfortunate dilemmy."

I accepted his advice, and determined to wait upon the dapper deacon. I was physically afraid to encounter Buster, not so much on account of his spiritual pretension, as of what I had heard of his domestic behaviour. It was not a very difficult task to obtain from Mrs. Thompson the secret history of many of her highly-privileged acquaintances and brethren. She enjoyed, in a powerful degree, the peculiar virtue of her amiable sex, and to communicate secrets, delivered to her in strictest confidence, and imparted by her again with equal caution and provisory care, was the choicest recreation of her well-employed and useful life. It was through this lady that I was favoured with a glance into the natural heart of Mr. Buster; or into what he would himself have called, with a most unfilial disgust, "HIS OLD MAN." It appeared that, like most great *actors*, he was a very different personage before and behind the curtain. Kings, who are miserable and gloomy through the five acts of a dismal tragedy, and who must needs die at the end of it, are your merriest knaves over a tankard at the Shakspeare's Head. Your stage fool shall be the dullest dog that ever spoiled mirth with sour and discontented looks. Jabez Buster, his employment being over at Mr. Clayton's theatre, his dress thrown aside, his mask put by, was not to be recognised by his nearest friend. This is the perfection of art. A greater tyrant on a small scale, with limited means, never existed than the saintly Buster when his character was done, and he found himself again in the bosom of his family. Unhappy bosom was it, and sad frustration did his presence, nine times out of ten, produce there. He had four sons, and a delicate creature for a wife, born to be crushed. The sons were remarkable chiefly for their hypocrisy, which promised, in the fulness of time, to throw their highly-gifted parent's far into the shade; and secondarily, for their persecution of their helpless and indulgent mother. They witnessed and approved so much the success of Jabez in this particular, that during his absence they cultivated the affectionate habit until it became a kind of second nature, infinitely more racy and agreeable than the primary. In propor-

tion to their deliberate oppression of their mother, was their natural dread and terror of their father. Mrs. Thompson pronounced it "the shockingest thing in this world to be present when the young blue-beards were worriting their mother's soul out with saying, '*I sha'n't*,' and '*I won't*' to everything, and swearing '*they'd tell their father this*,' '*and put him up to that, and then wouldn't he make a jolly row about it*;' with hollering out for nothing at all, only to frighten the poor timid cretur, and then making a holabaloo with the chairs, or perhaps falling down, roaring and kicking, just to drive the poor thing clean out of her wits, on purpose to laugh at her for being so taken in. Well, but it was a great treat, too," she added, "to hear, in the midst of all this, Buster's heavy foot in the passage, and to see what a scrimmage there was at once amongst all the young hypocrites. How they all run in different directions—one to the fire—one to the table—one out at the back-door—one anywhere he could—all of 'em as silent as mice, and afear'd of the very eye of the blacksmith, who knew, good man, how to keep every man Jack of 'em in order, and, if a word didn't do, wasn't by no means behind-hand with blows. Buster," she continued, "had his faults like other men, but he was a saint if ever there was one. To be sure, he did like to have his own way at home, and wasn't it natural? And if he was rather overbearing and cruel to his wife, wasn't that, she should like to know, Satan warring with the new man, and sometimes getting the better of it? And if he was, as Thompson had hinted, rayther partial to the creature, and liked good living, what was this to the purpose? it was an infirmity that might happen to the best Christian living. Nobody could say that he wasn't a renewed man, and a chosen wessel, and faithful to his call. A man isn't a backslider because he's carnally weak, and a man isn't a saint because he's moral and well-behaved. 'Good works,' Mr. Clayton said, 'were filthy rags;' and so they were. To be sure, between themselves, there were one or two things said about Buster that she couldn't approve of. For instance, she had been told—but *this* was quite in confidence, and really must *not* go further—that Buster very often kept out late at night—sometimes didn't come home at all, and sometimes did at two o'clock in the morning, very hungry and ill-tempered; and then forced his poor wife out of bed, and made the delicate and shivering creature light a fire, cook beef-steaks, go into the yard for beer, and wait upon him till he had even eat every morsel up. She for one would never believe all this, though Mrs. Buster herself had told her every word with tears in her eyes, and in the greatest confidence; so she trusted I wouldn't repeat it, as it wouldn't look well in her to be found out telling other people's secrets."

Singular, perhaps, to say, the tale did not go further. I kept the lady's secret, and at the same time declined to approach Mr. Jabez Buster in the character of a suppliant. If his advocate and panegyrist had nothing more to say for him, it could not be uncharitable to conclude that the pretended saint was as bold a sinner as ever paid infamous courtship to religion, and as such was studiously to be avoided. I turned my attention from him to Tomkins. There was no grossness about him, no brutality, no abominable vice. In the hour of my defeat and desertion, he had extended to me his sympathy, and more in sorrow than in anger, I am convinced, he voted for my expulsion from the church when he found that his vote, and twenty added to it, would not have been sufficient to protect me. He could not act in opposition to the wishes of his friend and patron, Mr. Clayton; but very glad would he have been, as every word and look assured me, to meet the wishes of us both, had that been

practicable. If the great desire of Jehu Tomkins's heart could have been gratified, he never would have been at enmity with a single soul on earth. He was a soft, good-natured, easy man; most desirous to be let alone, and not uneasily envious or distressed to see his neighbours jogging on, so long as he could do his own good stroke of business, and keep a little way before them. Jehu was a Liberal too—in politics and in religion: in everything, in fact, but the one small article of *money*, and here, I must confess, the good Dissenter dissented little from the best of us. He was a stanch Conservative in matters connected with the *till*. For his private life it was exemplary—at least it looked so to the world, and the world is satisfied with what it sees. Jehu was attentive to his business—yes, very—and a business life is not monotonous and dull, if it be relieved, as it was in this case, by dexterous arts, that give an interest and flavour to the commonest pursuits. Sometimes a customer would die—a natural state of things, but a great event for Jehu. First, he would "improve the occasion" to the surviving relatives—condole and pray with them. Afterwards he would *improve* it to himself, in his own little room at night, when all the children were asleep, and no one was awake but Mrs. Tomkins and himself. Then he would get down his ledger, and turn to the deceased's account—

> "—— How *long* it is thou see'st,
> And he would gaze till it became *much longer*;"

"For who could tell whether six shirts or twelve were bought in July last; and what could be the harm of making those eight handkerchiefs a dozen! He was a strange old gentleman; lived by himself—and the books might be referred to, and speak boldly for themselves." Yes, cunning Jehu, so they might; with those interpolations and erasures that would confound and overcome a lawyer. When customers did not die, it was pastime to be dallying with the living. In adding up a bill with haste, how many times will four and four make *nine!* They generally did with Jehu. The best are liable to errors. It cost a smirk or smile; Jehu had hundreds at command, and the accident was amended. How easy is it sometimes to give no bill at all! How very easy to apply, a few months afterwards, for second payment; how much more easy still to pocket it without a word; or, if discovered and convicted, to apologize without a blush for the *mistake!* With regard to the domestic position of my interesting friend, it is painful to add, that the less that is said about it the better. In vain was his name in full, painted in large yellow letters, over the shop front. In vain was *Bot. of Jehu Tomkins* engraven on satin paper, with flourishes innumerable beneath the royal arms; he was no more the master of his house than was the small boy of the establishment, who did the dirty work of the place for nothing a-week and the broken victuals. If Jehu was deacon abroad, he was taught to acknowledge an *arch*deacon at home—one to whom he was indebted for his success in life, and for reminding him of that agreeable fact about four times during every day of his existence. I was aware of this delicate circumstance when I ventured to the linen-draper's shop on my almost hopeless mission; but, although I had never spoken to Mrs. Tomkins, I had often seen her in the chapel, and I relied much on the feeling and natural tenderness of the female heart. The respectable shop of Mr. Tomkins was in Fleet Street. The establishment consisted of Mrs. Tomkins *première;* Jehu, under secretary; and four sickly-looking young ladies behind the counter. It is to be said, to the honour of Mrs. Tomkins, that she admitted no young woman into her ser-

vice whose character was not *decided*, and whose views were not very clear. Accordingly, the four young ladies were members of the chapel. It is pleasing to reflect, that, in this well-ordered house of business, the ladies took their turns to attend the weekly prayer-meetings of the church! Would that I might add, that they were *not* severally met on these occasions by their young men at the corner of Chancery Lane, and invariably escorted by them some two or three miles in a totally opposite direction. Had Mrs. Tomkins been born a man, it is difficult to decide what situation she would have adorned the most. She would have made a good man of business—an acute lawyer—a fine casuist—a great divine. Her attainments were immense; her self-confidence unbounded. She was a woman of middle height and masculine bearing. She was not prepossessing notwithstanding her white teeth and large mouth, and the intolerable grin that a customer to the amount of a halfpenny and upwards could bring upon her face under any circumstances and at any hour of the day. Her complexion might have been good originally. Red blotches scattered over her cheek had destroyed its beauty. She wore a modest and becoming cap, and a gold eyeglass round her neck. She was devoted to money-making—heart and soul devoted to it during business hours. What time she was not in the shop, she passed amongst dissenting ministers, spiritual brethren, and deluded sinners. It remains to state the fact, that, whilst a customer never approached the lady without being repelled by the offensive smirk that she assumed, no dependent ever ventured near her without the fear of the scowl that sat naturally (and fearfully when she pleased) upon her dark and inauspicious brow. What wonder that little Jehu was crushed into nothingness, behind his own counter, under the eye of his own wife!

It was not without misgiving that I knocked modestly at the door of Mr. Jehu Tomkins. For himself, there was no solidity in his moral composition—nothing to grapple or rely upon. He was a small weak man, of no character at all; and but for his powerful wife and active partner, would have become the smallest of unknown quantities in the respectable parish that contained him. Upon his own weak shoulders he could not have sustained the burden of an establishment, and must inevitably have dwindled into the lightest of light porters, or the most aged of errand-boys. As for the deaconess, I have said already that the fact of her being a lady, and the possessor of a heart, constituted the only ground of hope that I could have in reference to her. This I felt to be insecure enough when I held the knocker in my hand, and remembered all at once the many little tales that I had heard, every one of which went far to prove that ladies may be ladies without the generous weakness of their sex—and carry hearts about with them as easily as they carry bags.

My first application was unsuccessful. The deacon was not at home. "Mr. Tomkins and his lady had gone *to hear* the Reverend Doctor Whitefroth,"—a northern and eccentric light, now blazing for a time in the metropolis. It is a curious fact, that Mr. Tomkins and Mr. Buster, and every nonconformist whom I had hitherto encountered, never professed to visit the house of prayer with any other object than that of *hearing*. It was never by any accident to worship or to pray. But let this pass.

I paid a second visit to my friend, and gained admittance. It was about half-past eight o'clock in the evening, and the shop had been closed some twenty minutes before. I was ushered into a well-furnished room behind the shop, where sat the firm—Mrs. Jehu and the junior partner. The latter looked into his lady's face, perceive a smile upon it, and then—but not till then—he offered me his hand, and welcomed me with much apparent warmth. This ceremony over, Mr. Tomkins grew fidgety and uneasy,

and betrayed a great anxiety to get up a conversation which he had not heart enough to set a-going. Mrs. Tomkins, a woman of the world, evinced no anxiety at all, sat smiling, and in peace. I perceived immediately that I must state at once the object of my visit, and I proceeded to the task.

"Mrs. Tomkins," I commenced.

"Sir?" said that lady, and then a postman's knock brought us to a stop, and Jehu skipped across the room to listen at the door.

"That's him, my dear Jemima!" exclaimed the linen-draper; "I know his knock," and then he skipped as quickly to his chair again.

The door of the apartment was opened by a servant girl, who entered the room alone, and approached her mistress with a card. Mrs. Tomkins looked at it through her eyeglass, said "she was most happy," and the servant then retired. The card was placed upon the table near me, and, as I believe, for my inspection. I took it up and read the following words, "*Mr. Stanislaus Levisohn.*" They were engraven in the centre of the paper, and were surrounded by a circle of rays, which in its turn was enveloped in a circle of clouds. In the very corner of the card, and in very small characters, the words "*general merchant*" were written.

There was a noise of shoe-cleaning outside the door for about five minutes, then the door was opened again by the domestic, and a remarkable gentleman walked very slowly in. He was a tall individual, with small cunning eyes, black eyebrows, and a beard. He was rather shabbily attired, and not washed with care. He had thick boorish hands, and smelt unpleasantly of tobacco smoke; an affected grin, at variance with every feature, was planted on his face, and sickened an unprejudiced observer at the very first gaze. His mode of speaking English betrayed him for a foreigner. He was a native of Poland. Before uttering a syllable, the interesting stranger walked to a corner of the room, turned himself to the wall, and muttered a few undistinguishable words; he then bowed lowly to the company, and took a chair, grinning all the while.

"Is that a Polish move?" asked Mr. Tomkins.

"It vos de cushtom mit de anshent tribes, my tear sare, vor alles tings, to recommend de family to de protection of de hevins. Vy not now mit all goot Christians?"

"Why not, indeed?" added Mrs. Tomkins. "May I offer you a glass of raisin wine?"

"Tank you. For de shtomack's sake—yase."

A glass was poured out. It was but decent to offer me another. I paid my compliments to the hostess and the gentlemen, and was about to drink it off, when the enlightened foreigner called upon me in a loud voice to desist.

"Shtay, mein young friend—ve are not de heathen and de cannibal. It is our privilege to live in de Christian society mit de Christian lady. Ve most ask blessing—alvays—never forget—you excuse—vait tree minutes."

It was not for me to protest against so pious a movement, albeit it presented itself somewhat inopportunely and out of place. Mr. Levisohn covered his face with one hand, and murmured a few words. The last only reached me—it was "Amen," and this was rather heaved up in a sigh, than articulately expressed.

"Do you like the wine?" asked Jehu, as if he thought it superfine.

"Yase, I like moch—especially de sherry and de port."

Jehu smiled, but made no reply.

Mrs. Tomkins supposed that port and sherry were favourite beverages

in Poland; but, for her part, she had found that nothing agreed so well with British stomachs as the native wines.

"Ah! my lady," said the Pole, "ve can give up very moch, so long ve got British religions."

"Very true, indeed," answered Mrs. Tomkins. "Pray, Mr. Levisohn, what may be your opinion of the lost sheep? Do you think they will come into the fold during our time?"

Before the gentleman replies, it may be proper to state on his behalf, that he had never given his questioner any reason to suppose that he was better informed on such mysterious subjects than herself. The history of his introduction into the family of the linen-draper is very short. He had been for some years connected with Mr. Tomkins in the way of business; having supplied that gentleman with all the genuine foreign, but certainly English, perfumery, that was retailed with considerable profit in his over-nice and pious establishment. Mrs. Tomkins, no less zealous in the cause of the church than that of her own shop, at length, and all on a sudden, resolved to set about his conversion, and to present him to the chapel as a brand plucked with her own hand from the burning. As a preliminary step, he was invited to supper, and treated with peculiar respect. The matter was gently touched upon, but discussion postponed until another occasion. Mr. Levisohn being very shrewd, very needy, and enjoying no particular principles of morality and religion, perceived immediately the object of his hostess, met her more than halfway in her Christian purposes, and accepted her numerous invitations to tea and supper with the most affectionate readiness. Within two months he was received into the bosom of the church, and became as celebrated for the depth and intensity of his belief, as for the earnestness and promptitude with which he attended the meetings of the brethren, particularly those in which eating and drinking did not constitute the least important part of the proceedings. Being a foreigner, he was listened to with the deepest attention, very often indeed to his serious annoyance; for his ignorance was awful, and his assurance, great as it was, not always sufficient to get him clear of his difficulties. His foreign accent, however, worked wonders for him, and, whenever too hard pressed, afforded him a secure and happy retreat. An unmeaning grin, and "*me not pronounce*," had saved him from precipices, down which an Englishman, *cæteris paribus*, must unquestionably have been dashed.

"Vill dey come?" said Mr. Levisohn, in answer to the question. "Yase, certainly, if dey like, I tink."

"Ah, sir! I fear you are a latitudinarian," said the lady.

"I hope hevin, my dear lady, vill forgive me for dat, and all my wickedness. I am a shinner. I shtink."

I looked at the converted gentleman at the same moment that Mrs. Jeha assured him that it would be a great thing if they were all as satisfied of their condition as he might be. "Your strong convictions of your worthlessness is alone a proof," she added, "of your accepted state."

"My lady," continued the humble Stanislaus, "I am rotten, I am a tief, a blackguard, a swindler, a pickpocket, a housebreak, a sticker mit de knife. I vish somebody would call me names all de day long, because I forget sometime dat I am de nashty vurm of de creation. I tink I hire a boy to call me names, and make me not forget. Oh, my lady! I always remember those fine words you sing—

'If I could read my title clear
To manshions in de shkies,
I say farevell to every fear,
And wipe my weeping eyes.'"

"That is so conscientious of you. Pray, my dear sir, is there an Establishment in Poland? or have you Independent churches?"

"Ah, my dear lady, we have noting at all!"

"Is it possible?"

"Yase, it is possible—it is true."

"Who could have thought it! What! Nothing?"

"Noting at all, my lady. Do not ask me again, I pray you. It is frightful to a goot Christian to talk dese tings."

"What is your opinion of the Arminian doctrine, Mr. Stanislaus?"

"Do you mean de doctrine?" enquired Stanislaus slowly, as though he found some difficulty in answering the question.

"Yes, my dear sir."

"I tink," said the gentleman after some delay, "it vould be very goot if were not for someting."

"Dear me," cried Mrs. Jehu, "that is so exactly my opinion."

"Den dere is noting more to be said about dat," continued Stanislaus, interrupting her; "and I hope you vill not ask dese deep questions, my dear lady, which are not at all proper to be answered, and vich put me into de low spirits. Shall ve sing a hymn?"

"By all means!" exclaimed the hostess, who immediately made preparations for the ceremony. Hymn-books were introduced, and the servant-maid ordered up, and then a quartet was performed by Mr. Levisohn, Mrs. Tomkins, her husband, and Betsy. The subject of the song was the courtship of Isaac. Two verses only have remained in my memory, and the manner in which they were given out by the fervent Stanislaus will never be forgotten. They ran thus:—

"Ven Abraham's servant to procure
A vife for Isaac vent,
He met Rebekah, tould his vish,
Her parents gave conshent.

* * * *

"'Shtay,' Satan, my old master, cries,
'Or force shall thee detain.'
'Hinder me not, I vill begone,
I vish to break my chain.'"

This being concluded, Mr. Tomkins asked Mr. Levisohn what he had to say in the business line; to which Mr. Levisohn replied, "Someting very goot, but should he not vait until after soppare?" whereupon Mr. Tomkins gave his lady a significant leer, and the latter retired, evidently to prepare the much-desired repast. Then did little Jehu turn confidentially to Stanislaus, and asked him when he meant to deliver that 'ere *conac* that he had promised him so long ago.

"Ven Providence, my tear dikkon, paremits—I expect a case of goots at de cushtom-house every day; but my friend vot examines de marchandis, and vot saves me de duties ven I makes it all right mit him, is vary ill, I am sorry for to say, and ve most wait mit Christian patience, my dear sare, till he get vell. You see dat?"

"Oh yes! that's clear enough. Well, Stanny, I only hope that fellow won't die. I don't think you'd find it so easy to make it *all right* with any other chap; that's all!"

"I hope he vill not die. Ve mosht pray dat he live, my dear dikkon. I tink it vill be vell if der goot Mr. Clayton pray mit der church for him. You shall speak for him."

"Well, what have you done about the *Eau de Cologne?*" continued Jehu Tomkins. "Have you nailed the fellow?"

"It vos specially about dis matter dat I vish to see you, my dear sare. I persvade der man to sell ten cases. He be very nearly vot you call in der mess. He valk into de Gazette next veek. He shtarve now. I pity him. De ten cases cost him ten pounds. I give fifty shilling—two pound ten. He buy meat for de childs, and is tankful. I take ten shillings for my trouble. Der Christian satisfied mit vary little."

"Any good bills in the market, Stanny?"

Stanislaus Levisohn winked.

"Ho—you don't say so," said the deacon. "Have you got 'em with you?"

"After soppare, my dear sare," answered Stanislaus, who looked at me, and winked again significantly at Jehu.

Mrs. Tomkins returned, accompanied by the vocal Betsy. The cloth was spread, and real silver forks, and fine cut tumblers, and blue plates with scripture patterns, speedily appeared. Then came a dish of fried sausages and parsley—then baked potatoes—then lamb chops. Then we all sat round the table, and then, against all order and propriety, Mrs. Jehu grossly and publicly insulted her husband at his own board, by calling upon the enlightened foreigner to ask a blessing upon the meal.

The company sat down; but scarcely were we seated before Stanislaus resumed.

"I tank you, my tear goot Mrs. Tomkins, for dat shop mit der brown, ven it comes to my turn to be sarved. It look just der ting."

Mrs. Jehu served her guest immediately.

"I vill take a sossage, tear lady, also, if you please."

"And a baked potato?"

"And a baked potato? Yase."

He was served.

"I beg your pardon, Christian lady, have you got, perhaps, der littel pickel-chestnut and der crimson cabbage?"

"Mr. Tomkins, go down-stairs and get the pickles," said the mistress of the house, and Tomkins vanished like a mouse on tiptoe.

Before he could return, Stanislaus had eaten more than half his chop, and discovered that, after all, "it was *not* just the ting." Mrs. Jehu entreated him to try another. He declined at first; but at length suffered himself to be persuaded. Four chops had graced the dish originally; the remaining two were divided equally between the lady and myself. I begged that my share might be left for the worthy host; but receiving a recommendation from his wife "not to mind *him*," I said no more, but kept Mr. Stanislaus Levisohn in countenance.

"I hope you'll find it to your liking, Mr. Stukely," said our hostess.

"Mishter vat?" exclaimed the foreigner, looking quickly up. "I tink I——"

"What is the matter, my dear sir?" enquired the lady of the house.

"Noting, my tear friend, I tought der young gentleman vos a poor unconverted sinner dat I met a long time ago. Dat is all. Ve talk of someting else."

Has the reader forgotten the dark-visaged individual, who, at the examination of my lamented father before the commissioners of bankruptcy, made his appearance in company with Mr. Levy and the ready Ikey? Him I mean of the vivid imagination, who swore to facts which were no facts at all, and whom an unpoetic jury sentenced to vile imprisonment for wilful perjury? *There he sat*, transformed into a Pole, bearded and whiskered, and the hair of his head close clipped, but in every other regard the same as when the constable invited him to forsake a too prosaic

and ungrateful world; and had Mr. Levisohn been wise and guarded, the discovery would never have been made by me; for we had met but once before, then only for a short half hour, and under agitating circumstances. But my curiosity and attention once roused by his exclamation, it was impossible to mistake my man. I fixed my eye upon him, and the harder he pulled at his chop, and the more he attempted to evade my gaze, the more satisfied was I, that a villain and an impostor was seated amongst us. Thinking, absurdly enough, to do my host and hostess a lasting service, I determined without delay to unmask the pretended saint, and to secure his victims from the designs he purposed.

"Mr. Levisohn," I said immediately, "you have told the truths—we have met before."

"Nevare, my tear friend, you mistake; nevare in my life, upon my vurd!"

"Mrs. Tomkins," I continued, rising, "I should not be worthy of your hospitality if I did not at once make known to you the character of that man. He is a convicted criminal. I myself know him to be guilty of the grossest practices." Mr. Levisohn dropped his chop, turned his greasy face up, and then looked round the room, and endeavoured to appear unconcerned, innocent, and amazed, all at once. At this moment Jehu entered the room with the pickles, and the face of the deaconess grew fearfully stern.

"Were you ever in the Court of Bankruptcy, Mr. Levisohn?" I continued.

"I have never been out of London, my good sare. You labour under de mistake.—I excuse you. Ah!" he cried out suddenly, as if a new idea had struck him very hard; "I see now vot it is. I explain. You take me for somebody else."

"I do not, sir. I accuse you publicly of having committed perjury of the most shameless kind, and I can prove you guilty of the charge. Do you know a person of the name of Levy?"

Mr. Stanislaus looked to the ceiling after the manner of individuals who desire, or who do not desire, as the case may be, to call a subject to remembrance. "No," he answered, after a long pause; "certainly not. I never hear dat name."

"Beware of him, Mrs. Tomkins," I continued; "he is an imposter, a disgrace to mankind, and to the faith which he professes."

"What do you mean by that, you impertinent young man?" said Mrs. Tomkins, her blood rising to her face, herself rising from her chair. "I should have thought that a man who had been so recently expelled from his church would have had more decency. A pretty person you must be, to bring a charge of this kind against so good a creature as that."

"No, do not say dat," interposed Stanny; "I am not goot. I am a brute beast."

"Mr. Tomkins," continued the lady, "I don't know what object that person has in disturbing the peace of our family, or why he comes here at all to-night. He is a mischief-making, hardened young man, or he would never have come to what he has. Well, I'm sure—What will Satan put into his head next?"

"I vould vish you be not angry. Der young gentleman is, I dare say, vary goot at heart. He is labouring under de delessions."

"Mr. Levisohn, pardon me, I am not. Proofs exist, and I can bring them to convict you."

"Do you hear that, Mr. Tomkins? Were you ever insulted so before! Are you master in your own house?"

"What shall I do?" said Jebu, trembling with excitement at the door.

"Do! What! Give him his hat, turn him out."

"Oh, my tear goet Christian friends!" said Mr. Levisohn imploringly; "de beeels of der Christian growls ven he sees dese sights; vot is de good of to fight? It is shtoopid. Let me be der peacemaker. Der young man has been drink, perhaps. I forgive him from de bottom of my heart. If ve quarrel ve fight. If we fight ve lose every ting.

'So Samson, ven his hair vos lost,
Met the Philistines to his cost,
Shook his vain limbs in shad shurprise,
Made feeble fight, and lost his eyes.'"

"Mr. Tomkins!" I exclaimed, "I court enquiry, I can obtain proofs."

"We want none of your proofs, you backslider," cried the deaconess.

"Madam, you——"

"Get out of the house, ambassador of Satan! Mr. Tomkins, will you tell him instantly to go?"

"Go!" squealed Tomkins from the door, not advancing an inch.

I seized my hat, and left the table.

"You will be sorry for this, sir," said I; "and you, madam——"

"Don't talk to me, you bad man. If you don't go this minute, I'll spring the rattle and have up the watchmen."

I did not attempt to say another word. I left the room, and hurried from the house. I had hardly shut the street door before it was violently opened again, and the head of Mr. Levisohn made itself apparent.

"Go home," exclaimed that gentleman, "and pray to be shaved, you shtoopid ass!"

It was not many days after the enacting of this scene, that I entered upon my duties as the instructor of the infant children of my friend. It was useless to renew my application to the deacon, and I abandoned the idea. The youngest of my pupils was the lisping Billy. It was my honour to introduce him at the very porch of knowledge—to place him on the first step of learning's ladder—to make familiar to him the simple letters of his native tongue, in whose mysterious combinations the mighty souls of men appear and speak. The lesson of the alphabet was the first that I gave, and a heavy sadness depressed and humbled me; when as the child repeated, wonderingly after me, letter by letter, I could not but feel deeply and acutely the miserable blighting of my youthful promises. How long was it ago—it seemed but yesterday—when the sun used to shine brightly into my own dear bedroom, and awake me with its first gush of light, telling my ready fancy that he came to rouse me from inaction, and to encourage me to my labours! Oh, happy labours! Beloved books! What joy I had amongst you!

We were still engaged upon our lesson, when John Thompson interrupted the proceeding, by entering the apartment in great haste, and placing in my hands a newspaper. "He had been searching," he said, "for one whole fortnight, to find a situation that would suit me, and now he thought that he had hit upon it. There it was, 'a tutorer in a human family,' to teach the languages and the sciences. Apply from two to four. It's just three now. Send the youngster to his mother, and see after it, my friend. I wouldn't have you lose it for the world." I took the journal from his hands, and, as though placed there by the hand of the avenger to arouse deeper remorse, to draw still hotter blood from the lacerated heart, the following announcement, and nothing else, glared on the paper, and took possession of my sight:—

"UNIVERSITY INTELLIGENCE.—After a contest more severe than any known for years, MR. JOHN SMITHSON, *of Trinity College, Cambridge*, has been declared THE SENIOR WRANGLER of his year. Mr. Smithson is, we understand, the son of an humble curate in Norfolk, whose principal support has been derived from the exertions of his son during his residence in the University. The honour could not have been conferred on a more deserving child of Alma Mater."

A hundred recollections crowded on my brain. My heart was torn with anguish. The perseverance and the filial piety of Smithson, so opposite to my unsteadiness and unnatural disloyalty, confounded and unmanned me. I burst into tears before the faithful Thompson, and covered my face for very shame.

"What is the matter, lad?" exclaimed the good fellow, pale with surprise, his eye trembling with honest feeling. "Have I hurt you? Drat the paper! Don't think, Stukely, I wished to get rid of you. Don't think so hard of your old friend. I thought to help and do you service; I know you have the feelings of a gentleman about you, and I wouldn't wound 'em, God knows, for anything. There, think no more about it. I am so rough a hand, I'm not fit to live with Christians. I mean no harm, believe me. Get rid of you, my boy! I only wish you'd say this is your home, and never leave me—that would make me happy."

"Thompson," I answered, through my tears, "I am not deserving of your friendship. You have not offended me. You have never wronged me. You are all kindness and truth. I have had no real enemy but myself. Read that paper."

I pointed to the paragraph, and he read it.

"What of it?" he asked.

"Thompson, listen to me; what do you say of such a son?"

"I can guess his father's feelings," said my friend. "Earth's a heaven, Stukely, when father and child live together as God appointed them."

"But when a child breaks a parent's heart, Thompson—what then?"

"Don't talk about it, lad. I have got eleven of 'em, and that's a side of the pictur that I can't look at with pleasure. I think the boys are good. They have gone on well as yet; but who can tell what a few years will do?"

"Or a few months, Thompson," I answered quickly; "or a few days, or hours, when the will is fickle, principles unfixed, and the heart treacherous and false. That Smithson and I, Thompson, were fellow-students. We left home together—we took up our abode in the University together—we were attached to the same college—taught by the same master—read from the same books. My feelings were as warm as his. My resolution to do well apparently as firm, my knowledge and attainments as extensive. If he was encouraged, and protected, and urged forward by the fond love of a devoted household—so was I. If parental blessings hallowed his entrance upon those pursuits which have ended so successfully for him—so did they mine. If he had motive for exertion, I had not less—we were equal in the race which we began together—look at us now!"

"How did it happen, then?"

"He was honest and faithful to his purpose. I was not. He saw one object far in the distance before him, and looked neither to the right nor left, but dug his arduous way towards it. He craved not the false excitement of temporary applause, nor deemed the opinion of weak men essential to his design. He had a sacred duty to perform, which left him not the choice of action, and he performed it to the letter. He had a feeling conscience and a reasoning heart; and the home of his youth, and the

sister who had grown up with him, the father who had laboured, the mother who had striven for him, visited him by night and by day—in his silent study, and in his lonely bed, comforting, animating, and supporting him by their delightful presence."

"And what did you do?"

"Just the reverse of this. I had neither simplicity of aim, nor stability of affection. One slip from the path, and I hadn't energy to take the road again. One vicious inclination, and the virtuous resolves of years melted before it. The sneer of a fool could frighten me from rectitude—the smile of a girl render me indifferent to the pangs that tear a parent's heart. Look at us both. Look at him—the man whom I treated with contemptuous derision. What a return home for him—his mission accomplished—HIS DUTY DONE! Look at me, the outcast, the beggar, the despised—the author of a mother's death, a father's bankruptcy and ruin—with no excuse for misconduct, no promise for the future, no self-justification, and no hope of pardon beyond that afforded to the vilest criminal that comes repentant to the mercy-seat above."

"Well—but—Stukely—don't take the thing to heart. You are young—look for'ards. Oh! I tell you, it's a blessed thing to be sorry for our faults, and to feel as if we wished to do better for the time to come. I'm an older man than you, and I bid you take comfort, and trust for better things, and better things will come too. You are not so badly off now as you were this time twelvemonth. And you know I'll never leave you. Don't despond—don't give away. It's unnatural for a man to do it, and he's lost if he does. Oh! bless you, this is a life of suffering and sorrow, and well it is: for who wouldn't go mad to think of leaving all his young uns behind him, and everything he loves, if he wasn't taught that there's a quieter place, where all shall meet agin? You know me, my boy; I can't talk, but I want to comfort you and cheer you up—and so, give me your hand, old fellow, and say you won't think of all this any more, but try and forget it, and see about settling comfortably in life. What do you say to the advertisement? A tutorer in a human family, to teach the languages and the sciences. Come now, that's right; I'm glad to see you laugh. I suppose I don't give the right pronunciation to the words. Well, never mind; laugh at your old friend. He'd rather see you laugh at him, than teaze your heart about your troubles."

Thompson would not be satisfied until I had read the advertisement, and given him my opinion of its merits. He would not suffer me to say another word about my past misfortunes, but insisted on my looking forward cheerfully, and like a man. The situation appeared to him just the thing for me; and after all, if I had wrangled as well as that 'ere Smithson—(though, at the same time, *wrangling* seemed a very aggravating word to put into young men's mouths at all)—perhaps I shouldn't have been half as happy as a quiet comfortable life would make me. "I was cut out for a tutorer. He was sure of it. So he'd thank me to read the paper without another syllable." The advertisement, in truth, was promising. "The advertiser, in London, desired to engage the services of a young gentleman, capable of teaching the ancient languages, and of giving his pupils 'an introduction to the sciences.' The salary would be liberal, and the occupation with a humane family in the country, who would receive the tutor as one of themselves. References would be required and given."

"References would be required and given," I repeated, after having concluded the advertisement, and put the paper down.

"Yes, that's the only thing!" said Thompson, scratching his honest

ear, like a man perplexed and driven to a corner. "We haven't got no references to give. But I'll tell you what we've got, though. We've got the papers of these freehold premises, and we've something like two thousand in the bank. I'll give 'em them, if you turns out a bad un. That I'll undertake to do, and sha'n't be frightened either. Now, you just go, and see if you can get it. Where do you apply?"

"Wait, Thompson. I must not suffer you——"

"Did you hear what I said, sir? where do you apply?"

"At X Y Z," said I, "in Swallow-street, Saint James's."

"Then, don't you lose a minute. I shouldn't be surprised if the place is run down already. London's overstocked with tutorers and men of larning. You come along o' me, Billy, and don't you lose sight of this ere chance, my boy. If they wants a reference, tell 'em I'll be glad to wait upon 'em."

Three days had not elapsed after this conversation, before my services were accepted by X Y Z—and I had engaged to travel into Devonshire to enter at once upon my duties, as teacher in the dwelling-house of the Reverend Walter Fairman. X Y Z was a man of business; and, fortunately for me, had known my father well. He was satisfied with my connexion, and with the unbounded recommendation which Thompson gave with me. Mr. Fairman was incumbent of one of the loveliest parishes in England, and the guardian and teacher of six boys. My salary was fifty pounds per annum, with board and lodging. The matter was settled in a few hours, and before I had time to consider, my place was taken in the coach, and a letter was dispatched to Mr. Fairman, announcing my intended departure. Nothing could exceed the joy of Thompson at my success—nothing could be kinder and more anxious than his valuable advice.

"Now," he said, as we walked together from the coach-office, "was I wrong in telling you that better things would turn up? Take care of yourself, and the best wrangler of the lot may be glad to change places with you. It isn't lots of larning, or lots of money, or lots of houses and coaches, that makes a man happy in this world. They never can do it; but they do just the contrarery, and make him the miserablest wretch as crawls. *A contented mind* is 'the one thing needful.' Take what God gives gratefully, and do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. That's a maxim my poor father was always giving me, and I wish, when I take the young uns to church, that they could always hear it, for human natur needs it."

The evening before my setting out was spent with Thompson's family. I had received a special invitation, and Thompson, with the labouring sons, were under an engagement to the mistress of the house, to leave the workshop at least an hour earlier than usual. Oh! it was a sight to move the heart of one more hardened than I can boast to be, to behold the affectionate party assembled to bid me farewell, and to do honour to our leave-taking. A little feast was prepared for the occasion, and my many friends were dressed, all in their Sunday clothes, befittingly. There was not one who had not something to give me for a token. Mary had worked me a purse; and Mary blushed whilst her mother betrayed her, and gave the little keepsake. Ellen thought a pincushion might be useful; and the knitter of the large establishment provided me with comforters. All the little fellows, down to Billy himself, had a separate gift, which each must offer with a kiss, and with a word or two expressive of his good wishes. All hoped I would come soon again, and Alec more than hinted a request that I would postpone my departure to some indefinite period

which he could not name. Poor tremulous heart! how it throbbed amongst them all, and how sad it felt to part from them! Love bound me to the happy room—the only love that connected the poor outcast with the wide cold world. This was the home of my affections—could I leave it—could I venture once more upon the boisterous waters of life without regret and apprehension?

Thompson kindly offered to accompany me on the following morning to the inn from which I was destined to depart, but I would not hear of it. He was full of business; had little time to spare, and none to throw away upon me. I begged him not to think of it, and he acquiesced in my wishes. We were sitting together, and his wife and children had an hour or two previously retired to rest.

"Them's good children, ain't they, Stukely?" enquired Thompson, after having made a long pause.

"You may well be proud of them," I answered.

"It looked nice of 'em to make you a little present of something before you went. But it was quite right. That's just as it should be. I like that sort of thing, especially when a man understands the sperrit that a thing's given with. Now, some fellows would have been offended if anything had been offered 'em. How I do hate all that!"

"I assure you, Thompson, I feel deeply their kind treatment of their friend. I shall never forget it."

"You ain't offended, then?"

"No, indeed."

"Well, now I am so happy to hear it, you can't think," continued Thompson, fumbling about his breeches pocket, and drawing from it at length something which he concealed in his fist. "There, take that," he suddenly exclaimed; "take it, my old fellow, and God bless you! It's no good trying to make a fuss about it."

I held a purse of money in my hand.

"No, Thompson," I replied, "I cannot accept it. Do not think me proud or ungrateful; but I have no right to take it."

"It's only twenty guineas, man, and I can afford it. Now look, Stukely, you are going to leave me. If you don't take it, you'll make me as wretched as the day is long. You are my friend, and my friend mustn't go among strangers without an independent spirit. If you have twenty guineas in your pocket, you needn't be worrying yourself about little things. You'll find plenty of ways to make the money useful. You shall pay me, if you like, when you grow rich, and we meets again; but take it now, and make John Thompson happy."

PART XIII.

THE PARSONAGE.

"She was a phantom of delight
When first she gleam'd upon my sight.
A lovely apparition sent
To be a moment's ornament."

WORDSWORTH.

I RECALL a spring day—a sparkling day of the season of youth and promise—and a nook of earth, fit for the wild unshackled sun to skip along and brighten with his inconstant, giddy light. Hope is everywhere; murmuring in the brooks, and smiling in the sky. Upon the bursting trees she sits; she nestles in the hedges. She fills the throat of mating birds, and bears the soaring lark nearer and nearer to the gate of heaven. It is the first holiday of the year, and the universal heart is glad. Grief and apprehension cannot dwell in the human breast on such a day; and, for an hour, even *Self* is merged in the general joy. I reach my destination; and the regrets for the past, and the fears for the future, which have accompanied me through the long and anxious journey, fall from the oppressed spirit, and leave it buoyant, cheerful, free—free to delight itself in a land of enchantment, and to revel again in the unsubstantial glories of a youthful dream. I paint the Future in the colours that surround me, and I confide in her again.

It was noon when we reached the head-quarters of the straggling parish of Deerhurst. We had travelled since the golden sunrise over noble earth, and amongst scenes scarcely less heavenly than the blue vault which smiled upon them. Now the horizon was bounded by a range of lofty hills linked to each other by gentle undulations, and bearing to their summits innumerable and giant trees; these, crowded together, and swayed by the brisk wind, presented to the eye the figure of a vast and supernatural sea, and made the intervening vale of loveliness a neglected blank. Then we emerged suddenly—yes, instantaneously—as though designing nature, with purpose to surprise, had hid behind the jutting crag, beneath the rugged steep—upon a world of beauty; garden upon garden, sward upon sward, hamlet upon hamlet, far as the sight could reach, and purple shades of all beyond. Then, flashes of the broad ocean, like quick transitory bursts of light, started at intervals, washing the feet of a tall emerald cliff, or, like a lake, buried between the hills. Shorter and shorter become the intermissions, larger and larger grows the watery expanse, until, at length, the mighty element rolls unobstructed on, and earth, decked in her verdant leaves, her flowers and gems, is on the shore to greet it.

The entrance to the village is by a swift, precipitous descent. On either side are piled rude stones, placed there by a subtle hand, and with a poet's aim, to touch the fancy, and to soothe the traveller with thoughts of other times—of ruined castles, and of old terrace walks. Already have the stones fulfilled their purpose, and the ivy, the brier, and the saxifrage have found a home amongst them. At the foot of the declivity, standing like a watchful mother, is the church—the small, the unpretending, the venerable and lovely village church. You do not see a dwelling till she is passed.

Before a house was built about her, she was an aged church, and her favoured graves were rich in heavenly clay. The churchyard gate; and then at once, the limited and quiet village, nestling in a valley and shut out from the world: beautiful and self-sufficient. Hill upon hill behind, each greener than the last—hill upon hill before, all exclusion, and nothing but her own surpassing loveliness to console and cheer her solitude. And is it not enough? What if she know little of the sea beyond its voice, and nothing of external life—her crystal stream, her myrtle-covered cottages, her garden plots, her variegated flowers and massive foliage, her shady dells and scented lanes, are joys enough for her small commonwealth. Thin curling smoke, that rises like a spirit from the hidden bosom of one green hillock, proclaims the single house that has its seat upon the eminence. It is the parsonage—my future home.

With a trembling heart I left the little inn, and took my silent way to the incumbent's house. There was no eye to follow; the leafy street was tenantless, and seemed made over to the restless sun and dissolute winds to wanton through it as they pleased. As I ascended, the view enlarged—beauty became more beauteous, silence more profound. I reached the parsonage gate, and my heart yearned to tell how much I longed to live and die on this sequestered and most peaceful spot. The dwelling-house was primitive and low; its long and overhanging roof was thatched; its windows small and many. A myrtle, luxuriant as a vine, covered its entire front, and concealed the ancient brick and wood. A raised bank surrounded the green nest, and a gentle slope conducted to a lawn fringed with the earliest flowers of the year. I rang the loud bell, and a neatly-dressed servant-girl gave me admittance to the house. In a room of moderate size, furnished by a hand as old at least as the grandsires of the present occupants, and well supplied with books, sat the incumbent. He was a man of fifty years of age or more, tall and gentlemanly in demeanour. His head was partly bald, and what remained of his hair was grey almost to whiteness. He had a noble forehead, a marked brow, and a cold grey eye. His mouth betrayed sorrow, or habitual deep reflection, and the expression of every other feature tended to seriousness. The first impression was unfavourable. A youth who was reading with the minister when I entered the apartment, was dismissed with a simple inclination of the head, and the Rev. Walter Fairman then pointed to a seat.

"You have had a tedious journey, Mr. Stukely," began the incumbent, "and you are fatigued, no doubt."

"What a glorious spot this is, sir!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, it is pretty," answered Mr. Fairman, very coldly as I thought. "Are you hungry, Mr. Stukely? We dine early; but pray take refreshment if you need it."

I declined respectfully.

"Do you bring letters from my agent?"

"I have a parcel in my trunk, sir, which will be here immediately. What magnificent trees!" I exclaimed again, my eyes riveted upon a stately cluster, which were about a hundred yards distant.

"Have you been accustomed to tuition?" asked Mr. Fairman, taking no notice of my remark.

"I have not, sir, but I am sure that I shall be delighted with the occupation. I have always thought so."

"We must not be too sanguine. Nothing requires more delicate handling than the mind of youth. In no business is experience, great discernment, and tact, so much needed as in that of instruction."

"Yes, sir, I am aware of it.

"No doubt," answered Mr. Fairman quietly. "How old are you?"

I told my age, and blushed.

"Well, well," said the incumbent, "I have no doubt we shall do. You are a Cambridge man, Mr. Graham writes me."

"I was only a year, sir, at the university. Circumstances prevented a longer residence. I believe I mentioned the fact to Mr. Graham."

"Oh, yes! he told me so. You shall see the boys this afternoon. They are fine-hearted lads, and much may be done with them. There are six. Two of them are pretty well advanced. They read Euripides and Horace. Is Euripides a favourite of yours?"

"He is tender, plaintive, and passionate," I answered; "but perhaps I may be pardoned if I venture to prefer the vigour and majesty of the sterner tragedian."

"You mean you like Æschylus better. Do you write poetry, Mr. Stukely—not Latin verses, but English poetry?

"I do not, sir."

"Well, I am glad of that. It struck me that you did. Will you really take no refreshment? Are you not fatigued?"

"Not in the least, sir. This lovely prospect, for one who has seen so little of nature as I have, is refreshment enough for the present."

"Ah," said Mr. Fairman, sighing faintly, "you will get accustomed to it. There is something in the prospect, but more in your own mind. Some of our poor fellows would be easily served and satisfied, if we could feed them on the prospect. But if you are not tired you shall see more of it if you will. I have to go down to the village. We have an hour till dinner-time. Will you accompany me?"

"With pleasure, sir."

"Very well." Mr. Fairman then rang the bell, and the servant-girl came in.

"Where's Miss Ellen, Mary?" asked the incumbent.

"She has been in the village since breakfast, sir. Mrs. Barnes sent word that she was ill, and Miss took her the rice and sago that Dr. Mayhew ordered."

"Has Warden been this morning?"

"No, sir."

"Foolish fellow. I'll call on him. Mary, if Cuthbert the fisherman comes, give him that bottle of port wine; but tell him not to touch a drop of it himself. It is for his sick child, and it is committing robbery to take it. Let him have the blanket also that was looked out for him."

"It's gone, sir. Miss sent it yesterday."

"Very well. There is nothing more. Now, Mr. Stukely, we will go."

I have said already that the first opinion which I formed of the disposition of Mr. Fairman was not a flattering one. Before he spoke a word, I felt disappointed and depressed. My impression after our short conversation was worse than the first. The natural effect of the scene in which I suddenly found myself had been to prepare my ever too forward spirit for a man of enthusiasm and poetic temperament. Mr. Fairman was many degrees removed from warmth. He spoke to me in a sharp tone of voice, and sometimes, I suspected, with the intention of mocking me. His manner, when he addressed the servant-girl, was not more pleasing. When I followed him from the room, I regretted the haste with which I had accepted my appointment; but a moment afterwards I entered into fairy-land again, and the passing shadow left me grateful to Providence for so much real enjoyment. We descended the hill, and for a time in silence. Mr. Fairman was evidently engaged in deep thought, and I had no wish

to disturb him. Every now and then we lighted upon a view of especial beauty, and I was on the point of expressing my unbounded admiration, when one look at my cool and matter-of-fact companion at once annoyed and stopped me.

"Yes," said Mr. Fairman at length, still musing. "It is very difficult—very difficult to manage the poor. I wonder if they are grateful at heart. What do you think, Mr. Stukely?"

"I have nothing to say of the poor, sir, but praise."

Mr. Fairman looked hard at me, and smiled unpleasantly.

"It is the scenery, I suppose. That will make you praise everything for the next day or so. It will not do, though. We must walk on our feet, and be prosaic in this world. The poor are not as poets paint them, nor is there so much happiness in a hovel as they would lead you to expect. The poets are like you—they have nothing to say but praise. Ah, me! they draw largely on their imaginations."

"I do not, sir, in this instance," I answered, somewhat nettled. "My most valued friends are in the humblest ranks of life. I am proud to say so. I am not prepared to add, that the most generous of men are the most needy, although it has been my lot to meet with sympathy and succour at the hands of those who were much in want of both themselves."

"I believe you, Mr. Stukely," answered the incumbent, in a more feeling tone. "I am not fond of theories; yet that's a theory with which I would willingly pass through life; but it will not answer. It is knocked on the head every hour of the day. Perhaps it is our own fault. We do not know how to reach the hearts and educate the feelings of the ignorant and helpless. Just step in here."

We were standing before a hut at the base of the hill. It was a low dirty-looking place, all roof, with a neglected garden surrounding it. One window was in the cob-wall. It had been fixed there originally, doubtless, with the object of affording light to the inmates; but light, not being essential to the comfort or happiness of the present tenants, was in a great measure excluded by a number of small rags which occupied the place of the diamond panes that had departed many months before. A child, ill-clad, in fragments of clothes, with long and dirty hair, unclean face, and naked feet, cried at the door, and loud talking was heard within. Mr. Fairman knocked with his knuckle before he entered, and a gruff voice desired him to "come in." A stout fellow, with a surly countenance and unshaven beard, was sitting over an apology for a fire, and a female of the same age and condition was near him. She bore an unhappy infant in her arms, whose melancholy peakish face, not twelve months old, looked already conscious of prevailing misery. There was no flooring to the room, which contained no one perfect or complete article of furniture, but symptoms of many, from the blanketless bed down to the solitary coverless saucepan. Need I add, that the man who sat there, the degraded father of the house, had his measure of liquor before him, and that the means of purchasing it were never wanting, however imputently charity might be called upon to supply the starving family with bread?

The man did not rise upon our entrance. He changed colour very slightly, and looked more ignorantly surly, or tried to do so.

"Well, Jacob Warden," said the incumbent, "you are determined to brave it out, I see." The fellow did not answer.

"When I told you yesterday that your idleness and bad habits were bringing you to ruin, you answered—*I was a liar*. I then said, that when you were sorry for having uttered that expression, you might come to the parsonage and tell me so. You have not been yet—I am grieved to say

it. What have I ever done to you, Jacob Warden, that you should behave so wickedly? I do not wish you to humble yourself to me, but I should have been glad to see you do your duty. If I did mine, perhaps, I should give you up, and see you no more, for I fear you are a hardened man."

"He hasn't had no work for a month," said the wife, in a tone of upbraiding, as if the minister had been the wilful cause of it.

"And whose fault is that, Mrs. Warden? There is work enough for sober and honest men in the parish. Why was your husband turned away from the Squire's?"

"Why all along of them spoons. They never could prove it agin him, that's one thing—though they tried it hard enough."

"Come, come, Mrs. Warden, if you love that man, take the right way to show it. Think of your children."

"Yes; if I didn't—who would, I should like to know? The poor are trodden under foot."

"Not so, Mrs. Warden, the poor are taken care of, if they are deserving. God loves the poor, and commands us all to love them. Give me your Bible!"

The woman hesitated a minute, and then answered—

"Never mind the Bible, that won't get us bread."

"Give me your Bible, Mrs. Warden."

"We haven't got it. What's the use of keeping a Bible in the house for children as can't read, when they are crying for summut to eat?"

"You have sold it, then?"

"We got a shilling on it—that's all."

"Have you ever applied to us for food, and has it been denied you?"

"Well, I don't know. The servant always looks grumpy at us when we come a-begging, and seems to begrudge us every mouthful. It's all very well to live on other persons' leavings. I dare say you don't give us what you could eat yourselves."

"We give the best we can afford, Mrs. Warden, and, God knows, with no such feeling as you suppose. How is the child? Is it better?"

"Yes, no thanks to Doctor Mayhew either."

"Did he not call, then?"

"Call! Yes, but he made me tramp to his house for the physic, and when he passed the cottage the other day, I called after him; but the devil a bit would he come back. We might have died first. Of course, he knows he isn't paid, and what does he care?"

"It is very wrong of you to talk so. You are well aware that he was hurrying to a case of urgency, and could not be detained. He visited you upon the following day, and told you so."

"Oh, yes, the following day! What's that to do with it?"

"Woman!" exclaimed Mr. Fairman, solemnly, "my heart bleeds for those poor children. What will become of them with such an example before their eyes? I can say no more to you than I have repeated a hundred times before. I would make you happy in this world if I could; I would save you. You forbid me. I would be your true friend, and you look upon me as an enemy. Heaven, I trust, will melt your heart! What is that child screaming for?"

"What! she hasn't had a blessed thing to-day. We had nothing for her."

Mr. Fairman took some biscuits from his pockets, and placed them on the table. "Let the girl come in and eat," said he. "I shall send you some meat from the village. Warden, I cannot tell you how deeply I feel your wickedness. I did expect you to come to the parsonage, and say

you were sorry. It would have looked well, and I should have liked it. You put it out of my power to help you. It is most distressing to see you both going headlong to destruction. May you live to repent! I shall see you again this evening, and I will speak to you alone. Come, Mr. Stukely, our time is getting short."

The incumbent spoke rapidly, and seemed affected. I looked at him, and could hardly believe him to be the cold and unimpassioned man that I had at first imagined him.

We pursued our way towards the village.

"There, sir," said the minister, in a quick tone of voice, "what is the beautiful prospect, and what are the noble trees, to the heart of that man? What have they to do at all with man's morality? Had those people never seen a shrub or flower, could they have been more impenetrable, more insolent and suspicious, or steeped in vice much deeper? That man wants only opportunity, a large sphere of action, and the variety of crime and motive that are to be found amongst congregated masses of mankind, to become a monster. His passions and his vices are as wilful and as strong as those of any man born and bred in the sinks of a great city. They have fewer outlets—less capability of mischief—and there is the difference."

I ventured no remark, and the incumbent, after a short pause, continued in a milder strain.

"I may be, after all, weak and inefficient. Doubtless great delicacy and caution are required. Heavenly truths are not to be administered to these as to the refined and willing. The land must be ploughed, or it is useless to sow the seed. Am I not, perhaps, an unskilful labourer?"

Mr. Fairman stopped at the first house in the village—the prettiest of the half-dozen myrtle-covered cottages before alluded to. Here he tapped softly, and a gentle foot that seemed to know the visitor hastened to admit him.

"Well, Mary," said the minister, glancing round the room—a clean and happy-looking room it was—"Where's Michael?"

"He is gone, sir, as you bade him, to make it up with Cousin Willet. He couldn't rest easy, sir, since you told him that it was no use coming to church so long as he bore malice. He won't be long, sir."

Mr. Fairman smiled; and, cold as his grey eye might be, it did not seem so steady now.

"Mary, that is good of him; tell him his minister is pleased. How is work with him?"

"He has enough to do to carry him to the month's end, sir."

"Then, at the month's end, Mary, let him come to the parsonage. I have something for him there. But we can wait till then. Have you seen the itinerary preacher since?"

"It is not his time, sir. He didn't promise to come till Monday week."

"Do neither you nor Michael speak with him, nor listen to his public preachings. I mean, regard him not as one having authority. I speak solemnly, and with a view to your eternal peace. Do not forget."

Every house was visited, and in all opportunity was found for the exercise of the benevolent feelings by which the incumbent was manifestly actuated. He lost no occasion of affording his flock sound instruction and good advice. It could not be doubted for an instant that their real welfare, temporal and everlasting, lay deeply in his heart. I was struck by one distinguishing feature in his mode of dealing with his people; it was so opposed to the doctrine and practice of Mr. Clayton, and of those

who were connected with him. With the latter, a certain degree of physical fervour, and a conventional peculiarity of expression, were insisted upon and accepted as evidences of grace and renewed life. With Mr. Fairman, neither acquired heat, nor the more easily acquired jargon of a clique, were taken into account. He rather repressed than encouraged their existence; but he was desirous, and even eager, to establish rectitude of conduct and purity of feeling in the disciples around him:—these were to him tangible witnesses of the operation of that celestial Spirit before whose light the mists of simulation and deceit fade unresistingly away. I could not help remarking, however, that in every cottage the same injunction was given in respect of the itinerant; the same solemnity of manner accompanied the command; the same importance was attached to its obedience. There seemed to me, fresh from the hands of Mr. Clayton, something of bigotry and uncharitableness in all this. I did not hint at this effect upon my own mind, nor did I enquire into the motives of the minister. I was not pleased; but I said nothing. As if Mr. Fairman read my very thoughts, he addressed me on the subject almost before the door of the last cottage was closed upon us.

"*Bigoted* and *narrow-minded* are the terms, Mr. Stukely, by which the extremely liberal would characterise the line of conduct which I am compelled by duty to pursue. I cannot be frightened by harsh terms. I am the pastor of these people, and must decide and act for them. I am their shepherd, and must be faithful. Poor and ignorant, and unripe in judgment, and easily deceived by the shows and counterfeits of truth as the ignorant are, is it for me to hand them over to perplexity and risk? They are simple believers, and are contented. They worship God, and are at peace. They know their lot, and do not murmur at it. Is it right that they should be disturbed with the religious differences and theological subtleties which have already divided into innumerable sects the universal family of Christians whom God made one? Is it fair or merciful to whisper into their ears the plausible reasons of dissatisfaction, envy, and complaining, to which the uninformed of all classes but too eagerly listen? I have ever found the religious and the political propagandist united in the same individual. The man who proposes to the simple to improve his creed, is ready to point out the way to better his condition. He succeeds in rendering him unhappy in both, and there he leaves him. So would this man, and I would rather die for my people, than tamely give them over to their misery."

A tall, stout, weather-beaten man in the coarse dress of a fisherman, descending the hill, intercepted our way. It was the man Cuthbert, already mentioned by Mr. Fairman. He touched his south-wester to the incumbent.

"How is the boy, Cuthbert?" asked the minister, stopping at the same moment.

"All but well, sir. Doctor Mayhew don't mean to come again. It's all along of them nourishments that Miss Ellen sent us down. The doctor says he must have died without them."

"Well, Cuthbert, I trust that we shall find you grateful."

"Grateful, sir!" exclaimed the man. "If ever I forget what you have done for that poor child, I hope the breath——"

The brawny fisherman could say no more. His eyes filled suddenly, and he held down his head ashamed. He had no cause to be so.

"Be honest and industrious, Cuthbert; give that boy a good example. Teach him to love his God, and his neighbour as himself. That will be gratitude enough, and more than pay Miss Ellen."

"I'll try to do it, sir. God bless you!"

We said little till we reached the parsonage again; but before I re-entered its gate, the Reverend Walter Fairman had risen in my esteem, and ceased to be considered a cold and unfeeling man.

We dined; the party consisting of the incumbent, the six students, and myself. The daughter, the only daughter and child of Mr. Fairman, who was himself a widower, had not returned from the cottage to which she had been called in the morning. It was necessary that a female should be in constant attendance upon the aged invalid; a messenger had been dispatched to the neighbouring village for an experienced nurse; and until her arrival Miss Fairman would permit no one but herself to undertake the duties of the sick chamber. It was on this account that we were deprived of the pleasure of her society; for her accustomed seat was at the head of her father's table. I was pleased with the pupils: they were affable and well-bred. They treated the incumbent with marked respect, and behaved towards their new teacher with the generous kindness and freedom of true young gentlemen. The two eldest boys might be fifteen years of age; the remaining four could not have reached their thirteenth year. In the afternoon I had the scholars to myself. The incumbent retired to his library, and left us to pass our first day in removing the restraint that was the natural accompaniment of our different positions, and in securing our intimacy. I talked of the scenery, and found willing listeners. They understood me better than their master, for they were worshippers themselves. They promised to show me lovelier spots than any I had met with yet; sacred corners, known only to themselves, down by the sea, where the arbute and laurustinus grew like trees, and children of the ocean. Then there were villages near, more beautiful even than their own; one that lay in the lap of a large hill, with the sea creeping round, or rolling at its feet like thunder, sometimes. What lanes, too, Miss Fairman knew of! She would take me into places worth the looking at; and oh, what drawings she had made from them! Their sisters had bought drawings, and paid very dearly for them too, that were not half so finely done! They would ask her to show me her portfolio, and she would do it directly, for she was the kindest creature living. It was not the worst trait in the disposition of these boys, that whatever might be the subject of conversation, or from whatever point we might start in our discourse, they found pleasure in making all things bear towards the honour and renown of their young mistress. The scenery was nothing without Miss Fairman and her sketches. The house was dull without her; and the singing in the church, if she were ill and absent, was as different as could be. There were the sweetest birds that could be, heard warbling in the high trees that lined the narrow roads; but at Miss Fairman's window there was a nightingale that beat them all. The day wore on, and I did not see the general favourite. It was dusk when she reached the parsonage, and then she retired immediately to rest, tired from the labours of the day. The friend of the family, Doctor Mayhew, had accompanied Miss Fairman home; he remained with the incumbent, and I continued with my young companions until their bed-time. They departed, leaving me their books, and then I took a survey of the work that was before me. My duties were to commence on the following day, and our first subject was the tragedy of *Hecuba*. How very grateful did I feel for the sound instruction which I had received in early life from my revered and painstaking tutor; for the solid groundwork that he had established, and for the rational mode of tuition which he had from the first adopted. From the moment that he undertook to cultivate and inform the youthful intel-

lect, this became itself an active instrument in the attainment of knowledge—not, as is so often the case, the mere idle depositary of encumbering *words*. It was little that he required to be gained by rote; for he regarded all acquisitions as useless in which the understanding had not the chiefest share. He was pleased to communicate facts, and anxious to discover, from examination, that the principles which they contained had been accurately seen and understood. Then no labour and perseverance on his part were deemed too great for his pupil, and the business of his life became his first pleasure. In the study of Greek, for which at an early age I evinced great aptitude, I learned the structure of the language and its laws from the keen observations of my master, whose rules were drawn from the classic work before us—rather than from grammars. To this hour I retain the information thus obtained, and at no period of my life have I ever had greater cause for thankfulness, than when, after many months of idleness and neglect, with a view to purchase bread, I opened, not without anxiety, my book again, and found that time had not impaired my knowledge, and that light shone brightly on the pages, as it did of old. Towards the close of the evening, I was invited to the study of Mr. Fairman. Doctor Mayhew was still with him, and I was introduced to the physician as the teacher newly arrived from London. The doctor was a stout, good-humoured gentleman of the middle height, with a cheerful and healthy-looking countenance. He was, in truth, a jovial man, as well as a great snuff-taker. The incumbent offered me a chair, and placed a decanter of wine before me. His own glass of port was untouched, and he looked serious and dejected.

"Well, sir, how does London look?" enquired the doctor; "are the folks as mad as they used to be? What new invention is the rage now? What bubble is going to burst? What lord committed forgery last? Who was the last woman murdered before you started?"

I confessed my inability to answer.

"Well, never mind. There isn't much lost. I am almost ashamed of old England, that's the truth on't. I have given over reading the newspapers, for they are about as full of horrors as Miss What's-her-name's tale of the Infernals. What an age this is! all crime and fanaticism! Every man and every thing is on the rush. Come, Fairman, take your wine."

Mr. Fairman sat gazing on the fire quietly, and took no notice of the request. "People's heads," continued the medical gentleman, "seemed turned topsy-turvy. Dear me, how different it was in my time! What men are about I can't think. The very last newspaper I read, had an advertisement that I should as soon have expected to see there when my father was alive, as a ship sailing along this coast keel upwards. You saw it, Fairman. It was just under the Everlasting Life Pill advertisement; and announced that the Reverend Mr. Somebody would preach on the Sunday following at some conventicle, when the public were invited to listen to him—and that the doors would be opened half an hour earlier than usual to prevent squeezing. That's modern religion, and it looks as much like ancient play-acting as two peas. Where will these marching days of improvement bring us to at last?"

"Tell me, Mayhew," said Mr. Fairman, "does it not surprise you that a girl of her age should be so easily fatigued?"

"My dear friend, that makes the sixth time of asking. Let us hope that it will be the last. I don't know what you mean by '*so easily*' fatigued. The poor girl has been in the village all day, fomenting and poulticing old Mrs. Barnes, and if it had been any girl but herself, she would have

been tired out long before. Make your mind easy. I have sent the naughty puss to bed, and she'll be as fresh as a rose in the morning."

"She must keep her exertions within proper bounds," continued the incumbent. "I am sure she has not strength enough to carry out her good intentions. I have watched her narrowly, and cannot be mistaken."

"You do wrong, then, Fairman. Anxious watching creates fear, without the shadow of an excuse for it. When we have anything like a bad symptom, it is time to get uneasy."

"Yes, but what do you call a bad symptom, doctor?"

"Why, I call your worrying yourself into fidgets, and teasing me into an ill temper, a shocking symptom of bad behaviour. If it continue, you must take a dose. Come, my friend, let me prescribe that glass of good old port. It does credit to the cloth."

"Seriously, Mayhew, have you never noticed the short, hacking cough that sometimes troubles her?"

"Yes; I noticed it last January for the space of one week, when there was not a person within ten miles of you who was not either hacking, as you call it, or blowing his nose from morning till night. The dear child had a cold, and so had you, and I, and everybody else."

"And that sudden flush, too?"

"Why, you'll be complaining of the bloom on the peach next! That's health, and nothing else, take my word for it."

"I am, perhaps, morbidly apprehensive; but I cannot forget her poor mother. You attended her, Mayhew, and you know how suddenly that came upon us. Poor Ellen! what should I do without her!"

"Fairman, join me in wishing success to our young friend here. Mr. Stukely, here's your good health; and success and happiness attend you. You'll find little society here; but it is of the right sort, I can tell you. You must make yourself at home." The minister became more cheerful, and an hour passed in pleasant conversation. At ten o'clock, the horse of Doctor Mayhew was brought to the gate, and the gentleman departed in great good-humour. Almost immediately afterwards, the incumbent himself conducted me to my sleeping apartment, and I was not loath to get my rest. I fell asleep with the beautiful village floating before my weary eyes, and the first day of my residence at the parsonage closed peacefully upon me.

It was at the breakfast table on the succeeding morning that I beheld the daughter of the incumbent, the favourite and companion of my pupils, and mistress of the house—a maiden in her twentieth year. She was simply and artlessly attired, gentle and retiring in demeanour, and femininely sweet rather than beautiful in expression. Her figure was slender, her voice soft and musical; her hair light brown, and worn plain across a forehead white as marble. The eyebrows which arched the small, rich, hazel eyes, were delicately drawn, and the slightly aquiline nose might have formed a study for an artist. With the exception, however, of this last-named feature, there was little in the individual lineaments of the face to surprise or rivet the observer. Extreme simplicity, and perfect innocence—these were stamped upon the countenance, and were its charm. It was a strange feeling that possessed me when I first gazed upon her through the chaste atmosphere that dwelt around her. It was degradation deep and unaffected—a sense of shame and undeservedness. I remembered with self-abhorrence the relation that had existed between the unhappy Emma and myself, and the enormity and disgrace of my offence never looked so great as now, and here—in the bright presence of unconscious purity. She reassured and welcomed me with a natural smile, and pur-

sued her occupation with quiet cheerfulness and unconstraint. I did not wonder that her father loved her, and entertained the thought of losing her with fear; for, young and gentle as she was, she evinced wisdom and age in her deep sense of duty, and in the government of her happy home. Method and order waited on her doings, and sweetness and tranquillity—the ease and dignity of a matron elevating and upholding the maiden's native modesty. And did she not love her sire as ardently? Yes, if her virgin soul spoke faithfully in every movement of her guileless face. Yes, if there be truth in tones that strike the heart to thrill it—in thoughts that write their meaning in the watchful eye—in words that issue straight from the fount of love—in acts that do not bear one shade of selfish purpose. It was not a labour of time to learn that the existence of the child, her peace and happiness, were merged in those of the fond parent. He was everything to her, as she to him. She had no brother—he no wife: these natural channels of affection cut away, the stream was strong and deep that flowed into each other's hearts. My first interview with the young lady was necessarily limited. I would gladly have prolonged it. The morning was passed with my pupils, and my mind stole often from the work before me, to dwell upon the face and form of her, whom, as a sister, I could have doated on and cherished. How happy I should have been, I deemed, if I had been so blessed! Useless reflection! and yet pleased was I to dwell upon it, and to welcome its return as often as it recurred. At dinner we met again. To be admitted into her presence seemed the reward for my morning toil—a privilege rather than a right. What labour was too great for the advantage of such moments?—moments indeed they were, and less—flashes of time that were not here before they had disappeared. We exchanged but few words. I was still oppressed with the conviction of my own unworthiness, and wondered if she could read in my burning face the history of shame. How she must avoid and despise me, thought I, when she has discovered all, and how bold and wicked it was to darken the light in which she lived with the guilt that was a part of me! Not the less did I experience this when she spoke to me with kindness and unreserve. The feeling grew in strength. I was conscious of deceit and fraud, and could not shake the knowledge off. I was taking mean advantage of her confidence, assuming a character to which I had no claim, and listening to the accents of innocence and virtue with the equanimity of one good and spotless as herself. In the afternoon the young students resumed their work. When it was over, we strolled amongst the hills; and, at the close of a delightful walk, found ourselves in the enchanting village. Here we encountered Miss Fairman and the incumbent, and we returned home in company. In one short hour we reached it. How many hours have passed since *that* was ravished from the hand of Time, and registered in the tenacious memory! Years have floated by, and silently have dropped into the boundless sea, unheeded, unregretted; and these few minutes—sacred relics—live and linger in the world, in mercy it may be, to lighten up my lonely hearth, or save the whitened head from drooping. The spirit of one golden hour shall hover through a life, and shed glory where he falls. What are the unfruitful, unremembered years that rush along, frightening mortality with their fatal speed—an instant in eternity! What are the moments loaded with passion, intense and never-dying—years, ages upon earth! Away with the divisions of time, whilst one short breath—the smallest particle or measure of duration—shall outweigh ages. Breathless and silent is the dewy eve. Trailing a host of glittering clouds behind him, the sun stalks down, and leaves the emerald hills in deeper green. The

lambs are skipping on the path—the shepherd as loath to lead them home as they to go. The labourer has done his work, and whistles his way back. The minister has much of good and wise to say to his young family. They hear the business of the day: their guardian draws the moral, and bids them think it over. Upon my arm I bear his child, the fairest object of the twilight group. She tells me histories of this charmed spot, and the good old tales that are as old as the grey church beneath us; she smiles and speaks of joys amongst the hills, ignorant of the tearful eye and throbbing heart beside her, that overflow with new-found bliss, and cannot bear their weight of happiness.

Another day of natural gladness—and then the Sabbath; this not less cheerful and inspiriting than the preceding. The sun shone fair upon the ancient church, and made its venerable grey stones sparkle and look young again. The dark-green ivy that for many a year had clung there, looked no longer sad and sombre, but gay and lively as the newest of the new-born leaves that smiled on every tree. The inhabitants of the secluded village were already a-foot when we proceeded from the parsonage, and men and women from adjacent villages were on the road to join them. The deep-toned bell pealed solemnly, and sanctified the vale; for its sound strikes deeply ever on the broad ear of nature. Willows and yew-trees shelter the graves of the departed villagers, and the living wend their way beneath them, subdued to seriousness, it may be, by the breathless voice that dwells in every well-remembered mound. There is not one who does not carry on his brow the thoughts that best become it now. All are well dressed, all look cleanly and contented. The children are with their parents, their natural and best instructors. Whom should they love so well? To whom is honour due if not to them? The village owns no school to disannul the tie of blood, to warp and weaken the affection that holds them well together.

All was quietness and decorum in the house of prayer. Every earnest eye was fixed, not upon Mr. Fairman, but on the book from which the people prayed; in which they found their own good thoughts pourtrayed, their pious wishes told, their sorrow and repentance in clearest form described. Every humble penitent was on his knees. With one voice, loud and heartfelt, came the responses which spoke the people's acquiescence in all the pastor urged and prayed on their behalf. The worship over, Mr. Fairman addressed his congregation, selecting his subject from the lesson of the day, and fitting his words to the capacities of those who listened. Let me particularly note, that whilst the incumbent pointed distinctly to the cross as the only ground of a sinner's hope, he insisted upon good works as the necessary and essential accompaniment of his faith. "Do not tell me, my dear friends," he said, at the conclusion of his address—"do not tell me that you believe, if your daily life is unworthy a believer. I will not trust you. What is your belief, if your heart is busy in contrivances to overreach your neighbour? What is it, if your mind is filled with envy, malice, hatred, and revenge? What if you are given over to disgraceful lust—to drunkenness and debauchery? What if you are ashamed to speak the truth, and are willing to become a liar? I tell you, and I have warrant for what I say, that your conduct one towards another must be straightforward, honest, generous, kind, and affectionate, or you cannot be in a safe and happy state. You owe it to yourselves to be so; for if you are poor and labouring men, you have an immortal soul within you, and it is your greatest ornament. It is that which gives the meanest of us a dignity that no earthly honours can supply; a dignity that it becomes the first and last of us by every means to cherish and

support. Is it not, my friends, degrading, fearful, to know that we bear about with us the very image of our God, and that we are acting worse than the very brutes of the field? Do yourselves justice. Be pure—pure in mind and body. Be honest, in word and deed. Be loving to one another. Crush every wish to do evil, or to speak harshly; be brothers, and feel that you are working out the wishes of a benevolent and loving Father, who has created you for love, and smiles upon you when you do his bidding." There was more to this effect, but nothing need be added to explain the scope and tendency of his discourse. His congregation could not mistake his meaning; they could not fail to profit by it, if reason was not proof against the soundest argument. As quietly as, and, if it be possible, more seriously than, they entered the church, did the small band of worshippers, at the close of the service, retire from it. Could it be my fancy, or did the wife in truth cling closer to her husband—the father clasp his little boy more firmly in his hand? Did neighbour nod to neighbour more eagerly as they parted at the churchyard gate—did every look and movement of the many groups bespeak a spirit touched, a mind reproved? I may not say so; for my own heart was melted by the scene, and might mislead my judgment. There was a second service in the afternoon. This concluded, we walked to the sea-beach. In the evening Mr. Fairman related a connected history from the Old Testament; whilst the pupils tracked his progress on their maps, and the narrative became a living thing in their remembrances. Serious conversation then succeeded; to this a simple prayer, and the day closed, sweetly and calmly, as a day might close in Paradise.

The events of the following month partook of the character of those already glanced at. The minister was unremitting in his attendance upon his parishioners, and no day passed during which something had not been accomplished for their spiritual improvement or worldly comfort. His loving daughter was a handmaid at his side, ministering with him, and shedding sunshine where she came. The villagers were frugal and industrious; and seemed, for the most part, sensible of their incumbent's untiring efforts. Improvement appeared even in the cottage of the desperate Warden. Mr. Fairman obtained employment for him. For a fortnight he had attended to it, and no complaint had reached the parsonage of misbehaviour. His wife had learned to bear her imagined wrongs in silence, and could even submit to a visit from her best friend without insulting him for the condescension. My own days passed smoothly on. My occupation grew every day more pleasing, and the results of my endeavours as gratifying as I could wish them. My pupils were attached to me, and I beheld them improving gradually and securely under their instruction. Mr. Fairman, who, for a week together, had witnessed the course of my tuition, and watched it narrowly, was pleased to express his approbation in the warmest terms. Much of the coldness with which I thought he had at first encountered me disappeared, and his manner grew daily more friendly and confiding. His treatment was most generous. He received me into the bosom of his family as a son, and strove to render his fair habitation my genuine and natural home.

Another month passed by, and the colour and tone of my existence had suffered a momentous change. In the acquirement of a fearful joy, I had lost all joy. In rendering every moment of my life blissful and ecstatic, I had robbed myself of all felicity. A few weeks before, and my state of being had realised a serenity that defied all causes of perturbation and disquiet. Now it was a sea of agitation and disorder; and a breath, nothing, had brought the restless waves upon the quiet surface. Through

the kindness of Mr. Fairman, my evenings had been almost invariably passed in the society of himself and his daughter. The lads were early risers, and retired, on that account, at a very early hour to rest. Upon their dismission, I had been requested to join the company in the drawing-room. This company included sometimes Doctor Mayhew, the neighbouring squire, or a chance visitor, but consisted oftenest only of the incumbent and his daughter. Aware of the friendly motive which suggested the request, I obeyed it with alacrity. On these occasions, Miss Fairman used her pencil, whilst I read aloud; or she would ply her needle, and soothe at intervals her father's ear with strains of music, which he, for many reasons, loved to hear. Once or twice the incumbent had been called away, and his child and I were left together. I had no reason to be silent whilst the good minister was present; yet I found that I could speak more confidently and better when he was absent. We conversed with freedom and unrestraint. I found the maiden's mind well stored—her voice was not more sweet than was her understanding clear and cloudless. Books had been her joy, which, in the season of suffering, had been my consolation. They were a common source of pleasure. She spoke of them with feeling, and I could understand her. I regarded her with deep, unfeigned respect; but, the evening over, I took my leave, as I had come—in peace. Miss Fairman left the parsonage to pay a two days' visit at a house in the vicinity. Until the evening of the first day I was not sensible of her absence. It was then, and at the customary hour of our reunion, that for the first time I experienced, with alarm, a sense of loneliness and desertion—that I became tremblingly conscious of the secret growth of an affection, that had waited only for the time and circumstance to make its presence and its power known and dreaded. In the daily enjoyment of her society, I had not estimated its influence and value. Once denied it, and I dared not acknowledge to myself how precious it had become, how silently and fatally it had wrought upon my heart. The impropriety and folly of self-indulgence were at once apparent—yes, the vanity and wickedness—and, startled by what looked like guilt, I determined manfully to rise superior to temptation. I took refuge in my books; they lacked their usual interest, were ineffectual in reducing the ruffled mind to order. I rose and paced my room, but I could not escape from agitating thought. I sought the minister in his study, and hoped to bring myself to calm and reason by dwelling seriously on the business of the day—with him, the father of the lady, and *my master*. He was not there. He had left the parsonage with Doctor Mayhew an hour before. I walked into the open air restless and unhappy, relying on the freshness and repose of night to be subdued and comforted. It was a night to soften anger—to conquer envy—to destroy revenge—beautiful and bright. The hills were bathed in liquid silvery light, and on their heights, and in the vale, on all around, lay passion slumbering. What could I find on such a night, but favour and incitement, support and confirmation, flattery and delusion? Every object ministered to the imagination, and love had given that wings. I trembled as I pursued my road, and fuel found its unobstructed way rapidly to the flame within. Self-absorbed, I wandered on. I did not choose my path. I believe I did not, and I stopped at length—before the house that held her. I gazed upon it with reverence and love. One room was lighted up. Shadows flitted across the curtained window, and my heart throbbed sensibly when, amongst them, I imagined I could trace her form. I was borne down by a conviction of wrong and culpability; but I could not move, or for a moment draw away my look. It was a strange assurance that I felt—but

I did feel it, strongly and emphatically—that I should see her palpably before I left the place. I waited for that sight in certain expectation, and it came. A light was carried from the room. Diminished illumination there, and sudden brightness against a previously-darkened casement made this evident. The light ascended—another casement higher than the last was, in its turn, illumined, and it betrayed her figure. She approached the window, and for an instant—oh, how brief!—looked into the heavenly night. My poor heart sickened with delight, and I strained my eyes long after all was blank and dark again.

Daylight, and the employments of day, if they did not remove, weakened the turbulence of the preceding night. The more I found my passion acquiring mastery, with greater vigour I renewed my work, and with more determination I pursued the objects that were most likely to fight and overcome it. I laboured with the youths for a longer period. I undertook to prepare a composition for the following day, which I knew must take much thought and many hours in working out. I armed myself at all points—but the evening came and found me once more conscious of a void that left me prostrate. Mr. Fairman was again absent from home. I could not rest in it, and I too sallied forth, but this time to the village. I would not deliberately offer violence to my conscience, and I shrunk from a premeditated visit to the distant house. My own acquaintances in the village were not many or of long standing; but there were some half dozen, especial favourites of the incumbent's daughter. To one of these I bent my steps, with no other purpose than that of baffling time, that hung upon me painfully and heavily at home. For a few minutes I spoke with the aged female of the house on general topics; then a passing observation—in spite of me—escaped my lips in reference to Miss Ellen. The villager took up the theme, and expatiated widely. There was no end to what she had to say of good and kind for the dear lady. I could have hugged her for her praise. Prudence bade me forsake the dangerous ground, and so I did, to return again with tenfold curiosity and zest. I asked a hundred questions, each one revealing more interest and ardour than the last, and involving me in deeper peril. It was at length accomplished. My companion hesitated suddenly in a discourse, then stopped, and looked me in the face, smiling cunningly. "I tell you what, sir," she exclaimed at last, and loudly, "you are over head and ears in love, and that's the truth on't!"

"Hush, good woman," I replied, blushing to the forehead, and hastening to shut an open door. "Don't speak so loud. You mistake, it is no such thing. I shall be angry if you say so—very angry. What can you mean?"

"Just what I say, sir. Why, do you know how old I am? Seventy-three. I think I ought to tell, and where's the harm of it? Who couldn't love the sweetest lady in the parish—bless her young feeling heart?"

"I tell you—you mistake—you are to blame. I command you not to repeat this to a living soul. If it should come to the incumbent's ears——"

"Trust me for that, sir. I'm no blab. He sha'n't be wiser for such as me. But do you mean to tell me, sir, with that red face of your'n, you haven't lost your heart—leave alone your trembling? Ah, well, I hopes you'll both be happy, anyhow!"

I endeavoured to remonstrate, but the old woman only laughed and shook her aged head. I left her grieved and apprehensive. My secret thoughts had been discovered. How soon might they be carried to the confiding minister and his unsuspecting daughter! What would they think of me? It was a day of anxiety and trouble, that on which Miss

Fairman returned to the parsonage. I received my usual invitation; but I was indisposed, and did not go. I resolved to see her only during meals, and when it was impossible to avoid her. I would not seek her presence. Foolish effort! It had been better to pass hours in her sight, for previous separation made union more intense, and the passionate enjoyment of a fleeting instant was hoarded up, and became nourishment for the livelong day.

It was a soft rich afternoon in June, and chance made me the companion of Miss Fairman. We were alone: I had encountered her at a distance of about a mile from the parsonage, on the sea-shore, whither I had walked distressed in spirit, and grateful for the privilege of listening in gloomy quietude to the soothing sounds of nature—medicinal ever. The lady was at my side almost before I was aware of her approach. My heart throbbed whilst she smiled upon me, sweetly as she smiled on all. Her deep hazel eye was moist. Could it be from weeping?

"What has happened, Miss Fairman?" I asked immediately.

"Do I betray my weakness, then?" she answered. "I am sorry for it; for dear papa tells all the villagers that no wise man weeps—and no wise woman either, I suppose. But I cannot help it. We are but a small family in the village, and it makes me very sad to miss the ancient faces one after another, and to see old friends dropping and dropping into the silent grave."

As she spoke the church-bell tolled, and she turned pale, and ceased. I offered her my arm, and we walked on.

"Whom do you mourn, Miss Fairman?" I asked at length.

"A dear good friend—my best and oldest. When poor mamma was dying, she made me over to her care. She was her nurse, and was mine for years. It is very wrong of me to weep for her. She was good and pious, and is blest."

The church-bell tolled again, and my companion shuddered.

"Oh! I cannot listen to that bell," she said. "I wish papa would do away with it. What a withering sound it has! I heard it first when it was tolling for my dear mother. It fell upon my heart like iron then, and it falls so now."

"I cannot say that I dislike the melancholy chime. Death is sad. Its messenger should not be gay."

"It is the soul that sees and hears. Beauty and music are created quickly if the heart be joyful. So my book says, and it is true. You have had no cause to think that bell a hideous thing."

"Yet I have suffered youth's severest loss. I have lost a mother."

"You speak the truth. Yet, I have a kind father left me—and you——"

"I am an orphan, friendless and deserted. God grant, Miss Fairman, you may be spared my fate for years!"

"Not friendless or deserted either, Mr. Stukely," answered the young lady kindly; "papa does not deserve, I am sure, that you should speak so harshly."

"Pardon me, Miss Fairman. I did not mean to say that. He has been most generous to me—kinder than I deserve. But I have borne much, and still must bear. The fatherless and motherless is in the world alone. He needs no greater punishment."

"You must not talk so. Papa will, I am sure, be a father to you, as he is to all who need one. You do not know him, Mr. Stukely. His heart is overflowing with tenderness and charity. You cannot judge him by his manner. He has had his share of sorrow and misfortune; and death

has been at his door oftener than once. Friends have been unfaithful and men have been ungrateful; but trial and suffering have not hardened him. He has received injury like a child, and dealt mercy and love with the liberality of an angel. Trust my father, Mr. Stukely."

The maiden spoke quickly and passionately, and her neck and face crimsoned with animation. I quivered, for her tones communicated fire; but my line of conduct was marked, and it shone clear in spite of the clouds of emotion which strove to envelope and conceal it—as they did too soon.

"I would trust him, Miss Fairman, and I do," I answered, with a faltering tongue. "I appreciate his character, and I revere him. I could have made my home with him. I prayed that I might do so. Heaven seemed to have directed my steps to this blissful spot, and to have pointed out at length a resting-place for my tired feet. I have been most happy here—too happy. I have proved ungrateful, and I know how rashly I have forfeited this and everything. I cannot live here. This is no home for me. I will go into the world again—cast myself upon it—do anything. I could be a labourer on the highways, and be contented if I could see that I had done my duty, and behaved with honour. Believe me, Miss Fairman, I have not deliberately indulged—I have struggled, fought, and battled, till my brain has tottered. I am wretched and forlorn; but I will leave you—to-morrow—would that I had never come——" I could say no more. My full heart spoke its agony in tears.

"What has occurred? What afflicts you? You alarm me, Mr. Stukely."

I had sternly determined to permit no one look to give expression to the feeling which consumed me, to obstruct by force the passage of the remotest hint that should struggle to betray me; but as the maiden looked full and timidly upon me, I felt in defiance of me, and against all opposition, the telltale passion rising from my soul, and creeping to my eye. It would not be held back. In an instant, with one treacherous glance, all was spoken and revealed.

PART XIV.

THE FUGITIVE.

"It was of a strange order, that the doom
Of these two creatures should be thus traced out;
* * * * * * the one
To end in madness—both in misery."

BYRON.

THE tongue has nothing to say when the soul hath spoken all! What need of words in the passionate and early intercourse of love! There is no oral language that can satisfy or meet the requisitions of the stricken heart. Speech, the worldling and the false—oftener the dark veil than the bright mirror of man's thoughts—is banished from the spot consecrated to purity, unselfishness, and truth. The lovely and beloved Ellen learned, before a syllable escaped my lips, the secret which those lips would never have disclosed. Her innocent and conscious cheek acknowledged instantly her

quick perception, and with maiden modesty she turned aside—not angrily, but timorous as a bird, upon whose leafy covert the heavy fowler's foot had trod too harshly and too suddenly. I thought of nothing then but the pain I had inflicted, and was sensible of no feeling but that of shame and sorrow for my fault. We walked on in silence. Our road brought us to the point in the village at which I had met Miss Fairman and her father, when, for the first time, we became companions in our evening walk. We retraced the path which then we took, and the hallowed spot grew lovelier as we followed it. I could not choose but tell how deeply and indelibly the scene of beauty had become imprinted on my heart.

"To you, Miss Fairman," I began, "and to others who were born and nurtured in this valley, this is a common sight. To me it is a land of enchantment, and the impression that it brings must affect my future being. I am sure, whatever may be my lot, that I shall be a happier man for what I now behold."

"It is well," said my companion, "that you did not make the acquaintance of our hills during the bleak winter, when their charms were hidden in the snow, and they had nothing better to offer their worshipper than rain and sleet, and nipping winds. They would have lost your praise then."

"Do you think so? Imprisoned as I have been, and kept a stranger to the noblest works of Providence, my enjoyment is excessive, and I dare scarcely trust myself to feel it as I would. I could gaze on yonder sweet hillock, with its wild-flowers and its own blue patch of sky, until I wept."

"Yes, this is a lovely scene in truth!" exclaimed Miss Fairman pensively.

"Do you remember, Miss Fairman, our first spring walk? For an hour we went on, and that little green clump, as it appears from here, was not for a moment out of my sight. My eyes were riveted upon it, and I watched the clouds shifting across it, changing its hue, now darkening, now lighting it up, until it became fixed in my remembrance, never to depart from it. We have many fair visions around us, but that is to me the fairest. It is connected with our evening walk. Neither can be forgotten whilst I live."

It was well that we reached the parsonage gate before another word was spoken. In spite of the firmest of resolutions, the smallest self-indulgence brought me to the very verge of transgression.

In the evening I sat alone, and began a letter to the minister. I wrote a few lines expressive of my gratitude and deep sense of obligation. They did not read well, and I destroyed them. I recommenced. I reproached myself for presumption and temerity, and confessed that I had taken advantage of his confidence by attempting to gain the affections of his only child. I regretted the fault, and desired to be dismissed. The terms which I employed, on reperusal, looked too harsh, and did not certainly do justice to the motives by which throughout I had been actuated; for, however violent had been my passion, *principle* had still protected and restrained me. I had not coldly and *deliberately* betrayed myself. The second writing, not more satisfactory than the first, was, in its turn, expunged. I attempted a third epistle, and failed. Then I put down the pen and considered. I pondered until I concluded that I had ever been too hasty and too violent. Miss Fairman would certainly take no notice of what had happened; and if I were guarded—silent—and determined for the future, all would still be well. It was madness to indulge a passion which could only lead to my expulsion from the parsonage, and end in misery. Had I found it so easy to obtain a home and quiet, that both were to be so reck-

lessly and shamefully abandoned? Surely it was time to dwell soberly and seriously upon the affairs of life. I had numbered years and undergone trial sufficient to be acquainted with true policy and the line of duty. Both bade me instantly reject the new solicitation, and pursue, with singleness of purpose, the occupation which fortune had mercifully vouchsafed to me. All this was specious and most just, and sounded well to the understanding, that was not less able to look temperately and calmly upon the argument in consequence of the previous overflow of feeling. Reason is never so plausible and prevailing as when it takes the place of gratified passion. Never are we so firmly resolved upon good, as in the moment that follows instantly the doing of evil. Never is conscience louder in her complaints, than when she rises from a temporary overthrow. I had discovered everything to Miss Fairman. I had fatally committed myself. There was no doubt of this; and nothing was left for present consolation but sapient resolutions for the future. Virtuous and fixed they looked in my silent chamber, and in the silent hour of night. Morning had yet to dawn, and they had yet to contend with the thousand incitements which our desires are ever setting up to battle with our better judgment. I did not write to Mr. Fairman, but I rose from my seat much comforted, and softened my midnight pillow with the best intentions.

Fancy might have suggested to me, on the following morning, that the eyes of Miss Fairman had been visited but little by sleep, and that her face was far more pallid than usual, if her parent had not remarked, with much anxiety, when she took her place amongst us, that she was looking most weary and unwell. Like the sudden emanation that crimsons all the east, the beautiful and earliest blush of morning, came the driven blood into the maiden's cheek, telling of discovery and shame. Nothing she said in answer, but diligently pursued her occupation. I could perceive that the fair hand trembled, and that the gentle bosom was disquieted. I could tell why downwards bent the head, and with what new emotions the artless spirit had become acquainted. Instantly I saw the mischief which my rashness had occasioned, and felt how deeply had fallen the first accents of love into the poor heart of the secluded one. What had I done by the short, indistinct, most inconsiderate avowal, and how was it possible now to avert its consequence? Every tender and uneasy glance that Mr. Fairman cast upon his cherished daughter, passed like a sting to me, and roused the bitterest self-reproach. I could have calmed his groundless fears, had I been bold enough to risk his righteous indignation. The frankness and cordiality which had ever marked my intercourse with Miss Fairman, were from this hour suspended. Could it be otherwise with one so innocent, so truthful, and so meek! Anger she had none, but apprehension and conceptions strange, such as disturbed the awakened soul of woman, ere the storm of passion comes to overcharge it.

I slunk from the apartment and the first meal of the day, like a man guilty of a heinous fault. I pleaded illness, and did not rejoin my friends. I knew not what to do, and I passed a day in long and feverish doubt. Evening arrived. My pupils were dismissed, and once more I sat in my own silent room, lost in anxious meditation. Suddenly an unusual knock at the door roused me, and brought me to my feet. I requested the visitor to enter, and Mr. Fairman himself walked slowly in. He was pale and care-worn, and he looked, as I imagined, sternly upon me. "All is known!" was my first thought, and my throat swelled with agitation. I presented a chair to the incumbent; and when he sat down and turned his wan face upon me, I felt that my own cheek was no less blanched than his. I waited his rebuke in breathless suspense.

"You are indeed ill, Stukely," commenced Mr. Fairman, gazing earnestly. "I was not aware of this, or I would have seen you before. You have overworked yourself with the boys. You shall be relieved to-morrow. I will take charge of them myself. You should not have persevered when you found your strength unequal to the task. A little repose will, I trust, restore you."

With every animating syllable, the affrighted blood returned again, and I gained confidence. His tones assured me that he was still in ignorance. A load was taken from me.

"I shall be better in the morning, sir," I answered. "Do not think seriously of the slightest indisposition. I am better now."

"I am rejoiced to hear it," answered the incumbent. "I am full of alarm and wretchedness to-day. Did you observe my daughter this morning, Stukely?"

"Yes, sir," I faltered.

"You did, at breakfast, but you have not seen her since. I wish you had. I am sick at heart."

"Is she unwell, sir?"

"Do you know what consumption is? Have you ever watched its fearful progress?"

"Never."

"I thought you might have done so. It is a fearful disease, and leaves hardly a family untouched. Did she not look ill?—you can tell me that at least."

"Not quite so well, perhaps, as I have seen her, sir; but I should hope——"

"Eh—what! not very ill, then? Well, that is strange, for I was frightened by her. What can it be? I wish that Mayhew had called in. Every ailment fills me with terror. I always think of her dear mother. Three months before her death, she sat with me, as we do here together, well and strong, and thanking Providence for health and strength. She withered, as it might be, from that hour, and, as I tell you, three short months of havoc brought her to the grave."

"Was she young, sir?"

"A few years older than my child—but that is nothing. Did you say you did not think her looks this morning indicated any symptoms? Oh—no! I recollect. You never saw the malady at work. Well, certainly she does not cough as her poor mother did. Did it look like languor, think you?"

"The loss of rest might——"

"Yes, it might, and perhaps it is nothing worse. I know Mayhew thinks lightly of these temporary shadows; but I do not believe he has ever seen her so thoroughly feeble and depressed as she appears to-day. She is very pale, but I was glad to find her face free from all flush whatever. That is comforting. Let us hope the best. How do the boys advance? What opinion have you formed of the lad Charlton?"

"He is a dull, good-hearted boy, sir. Willing to learn, with little ability to help him on. Most difficult of treatment. His tears lie near the surface. At times it seems that the simplest terms are beyond his understanding, and then the gentlest reproof opens the flood-gate, and submerges his faculties for the day."

"Be tender and cautious, Stukely, with that child. He is a sapling that will not bear the rough wind. Let him learn what he will—rest assured it is all he can. His eagerness to learn will never fall short of yours to teach. He must be kindly encouraged, not frowned upon in his

reverses; for who fights so hard against them, or deplores them more deeply than himself? Poor, weak child, he is his own chastiser."

"I will take care, sir."

"Have you seen this coming on, Stukely?"

"With Charlton, sir?"

"No. Miss Fairman's indisposition. For many weeks she has certainly improved in health. I have remarked it, and I was taken by surprise this morning. I should be easier had Mayhew seen her."

"Let me fetch him in the morning, sir. His presence will relieve you. I will start early—and bring him with me."

"Well, if you are better, but certainly not otherwise. I confess I should be pleased to talk with him. But do not rise too early. Get your breakfast first. I will take the boys until you come back."

This had been the object of the anxious father's visit. As soon as I had undertaken to meet his wish, he became more tranquil. My mission was to be kept a secret. The reason why a servant had not been employed, was the fear of causing alarm in the beloved patient. Before Mr. Fairman left me, I was more than half persuaded that I myself had mistaken the cause of his daughter's suffering; so agreeable is it, even against conviction, to discharge ourselves of blame.

The residence of Dr. Mayhew was about four miles distant from our village. It was a fine brick house, as old as the oaks which stood before it, conferring upon a few acres of grass land the right to be regarded as a park. The interior of the house was as substantial as the outside; both were as solid as the good doctor himself. He was a man of independent property, a member of the University of Oxford, and a great stickler for old observances. He received a fee from every man who was able to pay him for his services; and the poor might always receive at his door, at the cost of application only, medical advice and physic, and a few commodities much more acceptable than either. He kept a good establishment, in the most interesting portion of which dwelt three decaying creatures, the youngest fourscore years of age and more. They were an entail from his grandfather, and had faithfully served that ancestor for many years as coachman, housekeeper, and butler. The father of Dr. Mayhew had availed himself of their integrity and experience until Time robbed them of the latter, and rendered the former a useless ornament; and dying, he bequeathed them, with the house and lands, to their present friend and patron. There they sat in their own hall, royal servants every one, hanging to life by one small thread, which when it breaks for one must break for all. They had little interest in the present world, to which the daily visit of the doctor, and that alone, connected them. He never failed to pay it. Unconscious of all else, they never failed to look for it.

The village clock struck eleven as I walked up the avenue that conducted to the house. The day was intensely hot, and at that early hour the fierce fire of the sun had rendered the atmosphere sweltry and oppressive. I knocked many times before I could obtain admittance, and, at last, the door was opened by a ragged urchin about twelve years of age, looking more like the son of a thief or a gipsy than a juvenile member of the decent household.

"Is Dr. Mayhew at home?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't know!" he answered, surlily; "you had better come and see;" and therewith he turned upon his heel, and tramped heavily down the kitchen stairs.

For a few seconds I remained where I was. At length, hearing no

voices in the house, and finding that no one was likely to come to me, I followed him. At the bottom of the stairs was a long passage leading to the offices. It was very dark, or it was rendered so to me who had just left the glare of noonday. At the end of it, however, a small lamp glimmered, and under its feeble help I advanced. Arriving at its extremity, I was stopped by the hum of many voices that proceeded from a chamber on the right. Here I knocked immediately. The voice of Dr. Mayhew desired me to enter. The door was opened the moment afterwards, and then I beheld the doctor himself and every servant of the house assembled in a crowd. The little boy who had given me admission was in the group; and in the very centre of all, sitting upright in a chair, was the strangest apparition of a man that I have ever gazed upon, before or since. The object that attracted, and at the same time repelled, my notice, was a creature whose age no living man could possibly determine. He was at least six feet high, with raven hair, and a complexion sallow as the sear leaf. Look at his figure, then mark the absence of a single wrinkle, and you judge him for a youth. Observe again: look at the emaciated face; note the jet-black eye, deeply sunken, and void of all fire and life; the crushed, the vacant, and forlorn expression; the aquiline nose, prominent as an eagle's, from which the parchment skin is drawn as rigidly as though it were a dead man's skin, bloodless and inert. The wear and tear, the buffeting and misery of seventy years are there. Seventy!—yea, twice seventy years of mortal agony and suffering could hardly leave a deeper impress. He is strangely clad. He is in rags. The remnants of fine clothes are dropping from his shrunken body. His hand is white and small. Upon the largest finger he wears a ring—once, no doubt, before his hand had shrivelled up, the property and ornament of the smallest. It is a sparkling diamond, and it glistens as his own black eye should, if it be true that he is old only in mental misery and pain. There is no sign of thought or feeling in his look. His eye falls on no one, but seems to pass beyond the lookers-on, and to rest on space. The company are far more agitated. A few minutes before my arrival the strange object had been found, with the boy whom I had first seen, wandering in the garden. He was apprehended for a thief, brought into the house, and not until Dr. Mayhew had been summoned, had it been suspected that the poor creature was an idiot. Commiseration then took the place of anger quickly, and all was anxiety and desire to know whence he had come, who he might be, and what his business was. He could not speak for himself, and the answers of the boy had been unsatisfactory and vague. When I entered the room the doctor gave me a slight recognition, and proceeded at once to a further examination of the stripling.

"Where did you pick him up, sir?" enquired the doctor.

"Mother sent me out a-begging with him," answered the gipsy boy.

"Who is your mother?"

"Mabel."

"Mabel what?"

"Mabel nothing."

"Where does she live then?"

"She doesn't live nowhere. She's a tramper."

"Where is she now?"

"How can I tell? We shall pick her up somewhere. Let me go, and take Silly Billy with me. I shall get such a licking if I don't."

"Is his name Billy?"

"No, Silly Billy; all them chaps as is fools are called Silly Billy. You know that, don't you? Oh, I say, do let's go now—there's good fellows!"

"Wait a moment, boy—not so fast. How long have you been acquainted with this unfortunate?"

"What, Silly Billy? Oh, we ain't very old friends! I only see'd him yesterday. He came up quite unawares to our camp whilst we were grubbing. He seemed wery hungry, so mother gave him summut, and made him up a bed—and she means to have him. So she sent me out this morning a-begging with him, and told me she'd break every gallows bone I'd got, if I did not bring him back safe. I say, now I have told all, let us go—there's a good gentleman! I am quite glad he is going to live with us. It's so lucky to have a Silly Billy."

"How is it, you young rascal, you didn't tell me all this before? What do you mean by it?"

"Why, it isn't no business of your'n. Let us go, will you?"

"Strange," said Dr. Mayhew, turning to his butler—"Strange that they should leave that ring upon his finger—valuable as it looks."

"Oh, you try it on, that's all! Catch mother leaving that there, if she could get it off. She tried hard enough, I can tell you, and I thought he'd just have bitten her hand off. Wasn't he savage neither, oh, cry! She won't try at it again in a hurry. She says it serves her right, for no luck comes of robbing a Silly Billy."

The servants, who betrayed a few minutes before great anxiety and apprehension, were perfectly overcome by this humorous sally, and burst, with one accord, into the loudest laughter. The generally jocose doctor, however, looked particularly serious, and kept his eye upon the poor idiot with an expression of deep pity. "Will he not speak?" he asked, still marking his unhappy countenance, bereft of every sign of sensibility.

"He won't say not nuffin," said the boy, in a tone which he hoped would settle the business. "You have no right to keep us. Let us go."

"Leave me with these persons," said the doctor, turning to the servants. "We will see if the tongue of this wretched creature be really tied. Go, all of you."

In an instant the room was left to Dr. Mayhew and myself—the idiot and his keeper.

"What is your name, my man?" enquired the physician, in a soothing tone. "Do not be frightened. Nobody will hurt you here. We are all your very good friends. Tell me now, what is your name?"

The questioner took the poor fellow at the same time by the hand, and pressed it kindly. The latter then looked round the room with a vacant stare, and sighed profoundly.

"Tell me your name," continued the doctor, encouraged by the movement. The lips of the afflicted man unclosed. His brick-red tongue attempted to moisten them. Fixing his expressionless eyes upon the doctor, he answered, in a hollow voice, "*Belton.*"

"Well, I never!" exclaimed the boy. "Them Silly Billies is the deceitfulest chaps as is. He made out to mother that he couldn't speak a word."

"Take care what you are about, boy," said Doctor Mayhew sternly. "I tell you that I suspect you." Turning to the idiot, he proceeded—"And where do you come from?"

The lips opened again, and the same hollow voice again answered, "*Belton.*"

"Yes, I understand—that is your name—but whither do you wish to go?"

"*Belton,*" said the man.

"SILLY BILLY."

"Strange!" ejaculated the doctor. "How old are you?"

"*Belton*," repeated the simple creature, more earnestly than ever.

"I am puzzled!" exclaimed Dr. Mayhew, releasing the hand of the idiot, and standing for a few seconds in suspense. "However," he continued, "upon one thing I am resolved. The man shall be left here, and in my care. I will be responsible for his safety until something is done for him. We shall certainly get intelligence. He has escaped from an asylum—I have not the slightest doubt of it—and we shall be able, after a few days, to restore him. As for you, sir," he added, addressing the young gipsy, "make the best of your way to your mother, and be thankful that you have come so well off—fly!"

The boy began to remonstrate, upon which the doctor began to talk of the cage and the horsepond. The former then evinced his good sense by listening to reason, and by selecting, as many a wiser man has done before him, the smaller of two necessary evils. He departed, not expressing himself in the most elegant terms that might have been applied to a leave-taking.

The benevolent physician soon made arrangements for the comfort of his charge. He was immediately placed in a bath, supplied with food, and dressed in decent clothing. He submitted at once to his treatment, and permitted his attendant to do what he would with him, taking, all the while, especial care to feel the diamond ring safe and secure under the palm of his own hand. A room was given to him and Robin, the gardener's son, who was forthwith installed his guardian, with strict directions not to leave the patient for an instant by himself. When Dr. Mayhew had seen everything that could be done properly executed, he turned cheerfully to me, and bade me follow him to his library.

"His clothes have been good," muttered the doctor to himself, as he sat down. "Diamond ring! He is a gentleman, or has been one. Curious business! Well, we shall have him advertised all round the country in a day or two. Meanwhile here he is, and will be safe. That trouble is over. Now, Stukely, what brings you so early? Anything wrong at home? Fairman in the dumps again; fidgety and restless, eh?"

I told my errand.

"Ah, I thought so! There's nothing the matter there, sir. She is well enough now, and will continue so, if her father doesn't frighten her into sickness, which he may do. I tell you what, I must get little puss a husband, and take her from him. That will save her. I have my eye upon a handsome fellow—Hollo, sir, what's the matter with you? Just look at your face in that glass. It is as red as fire."

"The weather, sir, is——"

"Oh, is it? You mean to say, then, that you are acquainted with the influences of the weather. That is just the thing, for you can help me to a few facts for the little treatise on climate which I have got now in hand. Well, go on, my friend. You were saying that the weather is——is what?"

"It is very hot, sir," I answered, dreadfully annoyed.

"Well, so it is; that's very true, but not original. I have heard the same remark at least six times this morning. I say, Master Stukely, you haven't been casting sheep's-eyes in that sweet quarter, have you? Haven't, perhaps, been giving the young lady instruction as well as the boys—eh?"

"I do not understand, sir," I struggled to say with coolness.

"Oh, very well!" answered Dr. Mayhew dryly. "That's very unfortunate too, for," continued he, taking out his watch, "I haven't time to explain

myself just now. I have an appointment four miles away in half an hour's time. I am late as it is. Williams will get you some lunch. Tell Fairman I shall see him before night. Make yourself perfectly at home, and don't hurry. But excuse me; this affair has made me quite behind-hand."

The doctor took a few papers and a book from the table, and, before I had time to reply, vanished, much to my relief and satisfaction. My journey homeward was not a happy one. I felt alarm and agitation, and the beautiful scenery failed to remove or temper them. My heart's dear secret had been once more discovered. Rumour could not omit to convey it speedily to the minister himself. In two directions the flame had now power to advance and spread; and, if the old villager remained faithful, what reason had I to hope that Dr. Mayhew would not immediately expose me—yes, must not regard it as his business and duty so to do? Yet one thing was certain. The secret, such as it had become, might, for all practical purposes, be known to the whole world; for unquestionably the shallowest observer was at present able to detect it. The old woman in the village, aged and ignorant as she was, had been skilful enough to discover it when I spoke, The doctor had gathered it from my looks even before I uttered a syllable. What was to hinder the incumbent from reading the tale on my forehead the moment that I again stood in his presence?

Reaching the parsonage, I proceeded at once to the drawing-room, where I expected to see the minister. No one was in the room, but a chair was drawn to the table, and the implements of drawing were before it. Could I not guess who had been the recent tenant of that happy chair—who had been busy there? Forgetful of everything but her, I stood for a time in silent adoration; then I ventured to approach and gaze on her handiwork. I shook with joy, with ravishment, and ecstacy, when I beheld it. What was not made known to me in that one hasty look! What golden dreams did not engage, what blissful triumph did not elevate, what passionate delight did not overflow my aching heart! Oh, it was true—and the blessed intelligence came to me with a power and a reality that no language could contain—SHE LOVED ME! she, the beloved, the good, the innocent, and pure! Before me was the scene—the dearest to me in life—through which we had so recently walked together, and upon which she knew I doated, for the sake of her whose presence had given it light and hallowed it. Why had she brought it on the paper? Why this particular scene, and that fair hillock, but for the sake of him who worshipped them—but that the mysterious and communicable fire had touched her soul, and melted it? I trembled with my happiness. There was a spot upon the paper—a tear—one sacred drop from the immaculate fount. Why had it been shed? In joy or pain—for whom—and wherefore? The paper was still moist—the tear still warm. Happiest and most unfortunate of my race, I pressed it to my lips, and kissed it passionately.

Miss Fairman entered at that moment.

She looked pale and ill. This was not a season for consideration. Before I could speak, I saw her tottering, and about to fall. I rushed to her, and held her in my arms. She strove for recovery, and set herself at liberty; but she wept aloud as she did so, and covered her face with her hands. I fell upon my knees, and implored her to forgive me.

"I have been rash and cruel, Miss Fairman; but extend to me your pardon, and I will go for ever, and disturb your peace no more. Do not despise me, or believe that I have deliberately interfered with your happiness, and destroyed my own for ever. Do not hate me when I shall see you no more."

"Leave me, Mr. Stukely, I entreat," sobbed Miss Fairman, weeping amain. Her hand fell. I was inflamed with passion, and I became indifferent to the claims of duty, which were drowned in the louder clamours of love. I seized that hand and held it firm. It needed not, for the lady sought not to withdraw it.

"I am not indifferent to you, dearest Miss Fairman!" I exclaimed; "you do not hate me—you do not despise me—I am sure you do not. That drawing has revealed to me all that I wish or care to know. I would rather die this moment possessed of that knowledge, than live a monarch without it."

"Leave me, leave me, I implore you," faltered Miss Fairman.

"Yes, dearest lady, I must—I shall leave you. I can stay no longer here. Life is valueless now. I have permitted a raging fire to consume me. I have indulged, madly, and fearfully indulged, in error. I have struggled against the temptation. Heaven has willed that I should not escape it. I have learned that you love me—come what may, I am content."

"If you regard me, Mr. Stukely, pity me, and go, now. I beg, I entreat you to leave me."

I raised the quivering hand, and kissed it ardently. I resigned it, and departed.

My whole youth was a succession of inconsiderate yieldings to passion, and of hasty visitings of remorse. It is not a matter of surprise that I hated myself for every word that I had spoken, as soon as I was again master of my conduct. It was my nature to fall into error against conviction and my cool reason, and to experience speedily the reaction that succeeds the commission of exorbitant crimes. In proportion to the facility with which I erred, was the extravagance and exaggeration with which I viewed my faults. During the predominance of a passion, death, surrounded by its terrors, would not have frightened me or driven me back—would not have received my passing notice; whilst it lasted it prevailed. So, afterwards, when all was calm and over, a crushing sense of wrong and guilt magnified the smallest offence, until it grew into a bugbear to scare me night and day. Leaving Miss Fairman, I rushed into the garden, preparatory to running away from the parsonage altogether. This, in the height of remorseful excitement, presented itself to my mind forcibly as the necessary and only available step to adopt: but this soon came to be regarded as open to numerous and powerful objections.

It seemed impossible that the incumbent could be kep any longer in ignorance of the affair; and it was better—oh! how much better—for my comfort and peace of mind that he should not be. In a few hours Dr. Mayhew would arrive, and his shrewd eye would immediately penetrate to the very seat of his patient's disquietude. The discovery would be communicated to her father—and what would he think of me?—what would become of me? I grew as agitated as though the doctor were at that moment seated with the minister—and revealing to his astonished listener the history of my deceit and black ingratitude. The feeling was not to be borne; and, in order to cast it off, I determined myself to be the messenger of the tale, and to stand the brunt of his first surprise and indignation. With the earliest conception of the idea, I ran to put it into execution. Nor did I stop until I reached the door of his study, when the difficulty of introducing at once so delicate a business, and the importance of a little quiet preparation, suggested themselves, and made me hesitate. It was, however, but for a moment for self-possession. I would argue with myself no longer. The few hours that inter-

veiled before the arrival of the doctor were my own; and if I permitted them to pass away, my opportunity was gone for ever, and every claim upon the kindness and forgiveness of my patron lost. I would confess my affection, and offer him the only reparation in my power—to quit his roof, and carry the passion with me for my punishment and torment.

Mr. Fairman was alone. The pupils were playing on the lawn upon which the window of the study opened. There they ran, and leaped, and shouted, all feeling and enjoyment, without an atom of the leaden care of life to press upon the light elastic soul; and there stood I, young enough to be a playmate brother, separated from them and their heart's joyousness by the deep broad line which, once traversed, may never be recovered, ground to the earth by suffering, trial, and disappointment; darkness and discouragement without; misery and self-upbraiding robbing me of peace within. My eyes caught but a glimpse of the laughing boys before they settled on the minister, and summoned me to my ungracious task—and it was a glimpse of a bright and beautiful world, with which I had nothing in common, of which I had known something, it might be ages since—but whose glory had departed even from the memory.

"Is he here?" enquired the incumbent.

"Doctor Mayhew could not accompany me, sir," I answered; "but he will shortly come."

"Thank you, Stukely, thank you. I have good news for you. I can afford you time to recruit and be yourself again. The lads return home on Monday next; you shall have a month's holiday, and you shall spend it as you will—with us, or elsewhere. If your health will be improved by travelling, I shall be happy to provide you with the means. I cannot afford to lose your services. You must not get ill."

"You are very kind, sir," I replied—"kinder than I deserve."

"That is a matter of opinion, Stukely. I do not think so. You have served me faithfully and well. I consult my own interest in rewarding you, and taking care of yours."

"Yes, sir, but——"

"Well, never mind now. We will not argue on whose side the obligation lies. It is perhaps well that we should both of us think as we do. It is likely that we shall both perform our duty more strictly if we strike the balance against ourselves. Go and refresh yourself. You look tired and worn. Get a glass of wine, and cheer up. Have you seen Miss Fairman?"

"It is concerning her, sir," I answered, trembling in every joint, "that I desire particularly to speak to you."

"Good heaven!" exclaimed the incumbent, starting from his chair, "what do you mean? What is the matter? What has happened? Why do you tremble, Stukely, and look so ghastly pale? What has happened since the morning? What ails her? Go on. Speak. Tell me at once. My poor child—what of her?"

"Calm yourself, I implore you, sir. Miss Fairman is quite well. Nothing has happened. Do not distress yourself. I have done very wrong to speak so indiscreetly. Pardon me, sir. I should have known better. She is well."

Mr. Fairman paced the room in perturbation, and held his hand upon his heart to allay its heavy throbs.

"This is very wrong," he said, "very impious. I have thought of nothing else this day—and this is the consequence. I have dwelt upon the probability of calamity, until I have persuaded myself of its actual presence—looked for woe, until I have created it. This is not the patience

and resignation which I teach; for shame, for shame!—go to thy closet, worm—repent and pray."

Mr. Fairman resumed his seat, and hid his face for a time in his hands. At length he spoke again.

"Proceed, Stukely. I am calm now. The thoughts and fears in which it was most sinful to indulge, and which accumulated in this most anxious breast, are dissipated. What would you say? I can listen as I ought."

"I am glad, sir, that the boys revisit their homes on Monday, and that a month, at least, will elapse before they return to you. In that interval, you will have an opportunity of providing them with a teacher worthier your regard and confidence; and, if I leave you at once, you will not be put to inconvenience."

"I do not understand you."

"I must resign my office, sir," I said with trepidation.

"Resign? Wherefore? What have I said or done?"

"Let me beg your attention, sir, whilst I attempt to explain my motives, and to do justice to myself and you. I mentioned the name of Miss Fairman."

"You did. Ha! Go on, sir."

"You cannot blame me, Mr. Fairman, if I tell you that, in common with every one whose happiness it is to be acquainted with that lady, I have not been insensible to the qualities which render her so worthy of your love, so deserving the esteem——" I stopped.

"I am listening, sir—proceed."

"I know not how to tell you, sir—in what language to express the growth of an attachment which has taken root in this poor heart, increased and strengthened against every effort which I have made to crush it."

"Sir!" uttered the incumbent, in great amazement.

"Do not be angry, Mr. Fairman, until you have heard all. I confess that I have been imprudent and rash, that I have foolishly permitted a passion to take possession of me, instead of manfully resisting its inroads; but if I have been weak, do not believe that I have been wicked."

"Speak plainly, Stukely. What am I to understand by this?"

"That I have dared, sir, to indulge a fond, a hopeless love, inspired by the gentlest and most innocent of her sex—that I have striven, and striven, to forget and flee from it—that I have failed—that I come to confess the fault, to ask your pardon, and depart."

"Tell me one thing," asked the incumbent quickly. "Have you communicated your sentiments to Miss Fairman?"

"I have, sir."

"Is her illness connected with that declaration?—You do not answer. Stukely, I am deceived in you. I mistrust and doubt you. You have *murdered* my poor child."

"Mr. Fairman, do not, I entreat——"

"Heaven have mercy on me for my wild, uncrucified temper. I will use no harsh terms. I retract that expression, young man. I am sorry that I used it. Let me know what more you have to say."

The tears came to my eyes, and blinded them. I did not answer.

"Be seated, Stukely," continued the minister, in a kinder tone; "compose yourself. I am to blame for using such a term. Forgive me for it—I did not mean all that it conveyed. But you know how fragile and how delicate a plant is that. You should have thought of her and me before you gratified a passion as wild as it is idle. Now, tell me everything. Conceal and disguise nothing. I will listen to you calmly, and I will be in-

dulgent. The past is not to be recalled. Aid me in the future, if you are generous and just."

I related all that had passed between Miss Fairman and myself—all that had taken place in my own turbulent soul—the battlings of the will and judgment, the determination to overcome temptation, and the sudden and violent yielding to it. Faithful to his command, I concealed nothing, and, at the close of all, I signified my readiness, my wish, and my intention to depart.

"Forgive me, sir, at parting," said I, "and you shall hear no more of the disturber of your peace."

"I do not wish that, Stukely. I am indebted to you for the candour with which you have spoken, and the proper view which you take of your position. I wish to hear of you, and to serve you—and I will do it. I agree with you, that you must leave us now—yes, and at once; and, as you say, without another interview. But I will not turn you into the world, lad, without some provision for the present, and good hopes for the future. I owe you much. Yes—very much. When I consider how differently you might behave, how very seriously you might interfere with my happiness"—as Mr. Fairman spoke, he opened the drawer of a table, and drew a cheque-book from it—"I feel that you ought not to be a loser by your honesty. I do not offer you this as a reward for that honesty—far from it—I would only indemnify you—and this is my duty."

Mr. Fairman placed a draft for a hundred pounds in my hand.

"Pardon me, sir," said I, replacing it on his table. "I can take no money. Millions could not *indemnify* me for all that I resign. Judge charitably, and think kindly of me, sir—and I am paid. Honour is priceless."

"Well, but when you get to London?——"

"I am not altogether friendless. My salary is yet untouched, and will supply my wants until I find employment."

"Which you shall not be long without, believe me, Stukely, if I have power to get it you—and I think I have. You will tell me where I may address my letters. I will not desert you. You shall not repent this."

"I do not, sir; and I believe I never shall. I propose to leave the parsonage to-night, sir."

"No, to-morrow. We must have some talk. You need not see her. I could not let you go to-night. You shall depart to-morrow; and I rely upon your good sense and honourable feelings to avoid another meeting. It could only increase the mischief that has already taken place, and answer no good purpose. You must be aware of this."

"I am, sir. You shall have no reason to complain."

"I am sure of it, Stukely. You had better see about your preparations. John will help you in any way you wish. Make use of him. There must be many little things to do. There can be no impropriety, Stukely, in your accepting the whole of your year's salary. You are entitled to that. I am sorry to lose you—very—but there's no help for it. I will come to your room this evening, and have some further conversation. Leave me now."

The incumbent was evidently much excited. Love for his child, and apprehension for her safety, were feelings that were, perhaps, too prominent and apparent in the good and faithful minister of heaven; they betrayed him at times into a self-forgetfulness, and a warmth of expression, of which he repented heartily as soon as they occurred. Originally of a violent and wayward disposition, it had cost the continual exercise and the prayers of a life, to acquire evenness of temper and gentleness of

deportment, neither of which, in truth, was easily, if ever, disturbed, if not by the amiable infirmity above alluded to. He was the best of men; but to the best, immunity from the natural weakness of mortality is not to be vouchsafed.

Mr. Fairman was the last person whom I saw that night. He remained with me until I retired to rest. He was the first person whom I saw on the following morning. I do not believe that he did not rely upon the word which I had pledged to him. I did not suppose that he suspected my resolution; but I am convinced that he was most restless and unhappy, from the moment that I revealed my passion to him, until that which saw me safely deposited at the foot of the hill, on my way to the village. So long as I remained in his house, he could only see danger for his daughter; and with my disappearance he counted upon her recovery and peace.

The incumbent was himself my companion from the parsonage. The servant had already carried my trunk to the inn. At the bottom of the hill, Mr. Fairman stopped and extended his hand

"Fare-you-well, Stukely," said he with emotion. "Once more, I am obliged to you. I will never forget your conduct; you shall hear from me."

Since the conversation of the preceding day, the incumbent had not mentioned the name of his daughter. I had not spoken of her. I felt it impossible to part without a word.

"What did Doctor Mayhew say?" I asked.

"She is a little better, and will be soon quite well, we trust."

"That is good news. Is she composed?"

"Yes—she is better."

"One question more, sir. Does she know of my departure?"

"She does not—but she will, of course."

"Do not speak unkindly of me, to her, sir. I should be sorry if she thought ill——"

"She will respect you, Stukely, for the part which you have acted. She must do so. You will respect yourself."

I had nothing more to say; I returned his warm pressure, and bade him farewell.

"God bless you, lad, and prosper you! We may meet again in a happier season; but if we do not, receive a father's thanks and gratitude. You have behaved nobly. I feel it—believe me."

Manly and generous tears rushed to the eyes of my venerable friend, and he could not speak. Once more he grasped my hand fervently, and in the saddest silence that I have ever known we separated.

There was gloom around my heart, which the bright sun in heaven, that gladdened all the land, could not penetrate or disperse; but it gave way before a touch of true affection, which came to me as a last memorial of the beloved scene on which I lingered.

I had hardly parted from the minister, before I perceived walking before me, at the distance of a few yards, the youngest of the lads who had been my pupils. At the request of the minister, I had neither taken leave of them, nor informed any one of my departure. The lad whom I now saw was a fine-spirited boy, who had strongly attached himself to me, and shown great aptitude, as well as deep desire, for knowledge. He knew very little when I came to him, but great pains had enabled him to advance rapidly. The interest which he manifested called forth in me a corresponding disposition to assist him; and the grateful boy, altogether overlooking his own exertions, had over and over again expressed himself in the warmest terms of thankfulness for my instruction, to which he in-

sisted he owed all that he had acquired. He was in his eleventh year, and his heart was as kind and generous as his intellect was vigorous and clear. I came up to him, and found him plucking the wild flowers from the grass as he wandered slowly along. I looked at him as I passed, and found him weeping.

"Alfred!" I exclaimed, "what do you here so early?"

The boy burst into a fresh flow of tears, and threw himself passionately into my arms. He sobbed piteously, and at length said,—

"Do not go, sir—do not leave me! You have been so kind to me. Pray, stop."

"What is the matter, Alfred?"

"John has told me you are going, sir. He has just taken your box down. Oh, Mr. Stukely, stay for my sake! I won't give you so much trouble as I used to do. I'll learn my lessons better—but don't go, pray, sir."

"You will have another teacher, Alfred, who will become as good a friend as I am. I cannot stay. Return to the parsonage—there's a dear boy."

"Oh, if you must go, let me walk with you a little, sir! Let me take your hand. I shall be back in time for breakfast—pray, don't refuse me that, sir!"

I complied with his request. He grasped my palm in both his hands, and held it there, as though he would not part with it again. He gave me the flowers which he had gathered, and begged me to keep them for his sake. He repeated every kind thing which I had done for him, not one of which he would forget, and all the names and dates which he had got by heart, to please his tutor. He told me that it would make him wretched, "to get up to-morrow, and remember that I was gone;" and that he loved me better than anybody, for no one had been so indulgent, and had taken such pains to make him a good boy. Before we reached the village, his volubility had changed the tears to smiles. As we reached it, John appeared on his return homeward. I gave the boy into his charge, and the cloud lowered again, and the shower fell heavier than ever. I turned at the point at which the hills became shut out, and there stood the boy fastened to the spot at which I had left him.

At the door of the inn, I was surprised to find my luggage in the custody of Dr. Mayhew's gardener. As soon as he perceived me, he advanced a few steps with the box, and placed a note in my hand. It was addressed to me at the parsonage, and politely requested me to wait upon the physician at my earliest convenience. No mention was made of the object of my visit, or of the doctor's knowledge of my altered state. The document was as short as it might be, and as courteous. Having read it, I turned to the gardener, or to where he had stood a moment before, with the view of questioning that gentleman; but, to my great astonishment, I perceived him about a hundred yards before me, walking as fast as his load permitted him towards his master's residence. I called loudly after him, but my voice only acted as a spur, and increased his pace. My natural impulse was to follow him, and I obeyed it.

Dr. Mayhew received me at his door with a very cunning smile and a facetious observation.

"Well, Master Stukely, this hot weather has been playing the deuce with us all. Only think of little puss being attacked with your complaint, the very day you were here suffering so much from it, and my getting a touch myself."

I smiled.

"Yes, sir, it is very easy to laugh at the troubles of other men; but I can tell you this is a very disagreeable epidemic. Severe times these for maids and bachelors. I shall settle in life now, sooner than I intended. I have fallen in love with puss myself."

I did not smile.

"To be sure, I am old enough to be her father; but so much the better for her. No man should marry till fifty. Your young fellows of twenty don't know their own mind—don't understand what love means—all blaze and flash, blue fire and sky-rocket—out in a minute. Eh, what do you say, Stukely?"

"Are you aware, sir, that I have left the parsonage?"

"To be sure I am; and a pretty kettle of fish you have made of it. Instead of treating love as a quiet and respectable undertaking, as I mean to treat it—instead of simmering your love down to a gentlemanly respect and esteem, as I mean to simmer it—and waiting patiently for the natural consequences of things, as I mean to wait—you must, like a boy as you are, have it all out in a minute, set the whole house by the ears, and throw yourself out of it without rhyme or reason, or profit to anybody. Now, sit down, and tell me what you mean to do with yourself."

"I intend to go to London, sir."

"Does your father live there?"

"I have no father, sir."

"Well—your mother?"

"She is dead, too. I have one friend there—I shall go to him until I find occupation."

"You naughty boy! How I should like to whip you! What right had you to give away so good a chance as you have had? You have committed a crime, sir—yes, you may look—you have, and a very grievous one. I speak as I think. You have been flying in the face of Providence, and doing worse than hiding the talent which was bestowed upon you for improvement. Do you think I should have behaved so at your age? Do you think any man in the last generation out of a madhouse would have done it? Here's your march of education!"

I bowed to Doctor Mayhew, and wished him good-morning.

"No, thank you, sir," answered the physician; "if I didn't mean to say a little more to you, I shouldn't have spoken so much already. We must talk these matters over quietly. You may as well stay a few days with your friend in the country, as run off directly to the gentleman in London. Besides, now I have made my mind up so suddenly to get married, I don't know how soon I may be called upon to undergo the operation—I beg the lady's pardon—the awful ceremony. I shall want a bride's-man, and you wouldn't make a bad one by any means."

The physician rang the bell, and Williams, the butler—a personage in black, short and stout, and exceedingly well fed, as his sleek face showed—entered the apartment.

"Will you see, Williams, that Mr. Stukely's portmanteau is taken to his room—bed quite aired—sheets all right, eh?"

"Both baked, sir," replied Williams, with a deferential but expressive smile, which became his face remarkably well.

"Then let us have lunch, Williams, and a bottle of the sherry!"

A look accompanied the request, which was not lost upon the butler. He made a profound obeisance, and retired. At lunch the doctor continued his theme, and represented my conduct as most blamable and improper. He insisted that I ought to be severely punished, and made to

feel that a boy is not to indulge every foolish feeling that rises, just as he thinks proper; but, like an inconsistent judge, he concluded the whole of a very powerful and angry summing up, by pronouncing upon me the verdict of an acquittal—inasmuch as he told me to make myself as comfortable as I could in his house, and to enjoy myself thoroughly in it for the next fortnight to come, at the very least. It may have been that, in considering my faults as those of the degenerate age in which I lived—which age, however, be it known, lived afterwards to recover its character, and to be held up as a model of propriety and virtue to the succeeding generation—the merciful doctor was willing to merge my chastisement in that which he bestowed daily upon the unfortunate object of his contempt and pity; or possibly he desired to inflict no punishment at all, but simply to perform a duty incumbent upon his years and station. Be this as it may, certain it is that with the luncheon ended all upbraiding and rebuke, and commenced an unreservedness of intercourse—the basis of a generous friendship, which increased and strengthened day by day, and ended only with the noble-hearted doctor's life—nor then in its effects upon my character and fortune.

It was on the night of the day on which I had arrived, that Doctor Mayhew and I were sitting in his *sanctum;* composedly and happily as men sit whom care has given over for a moment to the profound and stilly influences of the home and hearth. One topic of conversation had given place easily to another, and there seemed at length little to be said on any subject whatever, when the case of the idiot, which my own troubles had temporarily dismissed from my mind, suddenly occurred to me, and afforded us motive for the prolongation of a discourse which neither seemed desirous to bring to a close.

"What have you done with the poor fellow?" I enquired.

"Nothing," replied the physician. "We have fed him well, and his food has done him good. He is a hundred per cent. better than when he came; but he is still surly and tongue-tied. He says nothing. He is not known in the neighbourhood. I have directed hand-bills to be circulated, and placards to be posted in the villages. If he is not owned within a week, he must be given to the parish-officers. I can't help thinking that he is a runaway lunatic, and a gentleman by birth. Did you notice his delicate white hand, that diamond ring, and the picture they found tied round his neck?"

"What picture, sir?"

"Did I not tell you of it? The portrait of a lovely female—an old attachment, I suppose, that turned his brain; although I fancy sometimes that it is his mother or sister, for there is certainly a resemblance to himself in it. The picture is set in gold. When Robin first discovered it, the agony of the stricken wretch was most deplorable. He was afraid that the man would remove it, and he screamed and implored like a true maniac. When he found that he might keep it, he evinced the maddest pleasure, and beckoned his keeper to notice and admire it. He pointed to the eyes, and then groaned and wept himself, until Robin was frightened out of his wits, and was on the point of throwing up his office altogether."

"Do you think the man may recover his reason?"

"I have no hope of it. It is a case of confirmed fatuity, I believe. If you like to see him again, you shall accompany me to-morrow when I visit him. What a life is this, Stukely! What a strange history may be that of this poor fellow whom Providence has cast at our door! Well,

poor wretch, we'll do the best we can for him. If we cannot reach his mind, we may improve his body, and he will be then perhaps quite as happy as the wisest of us."

The clock struck twelve as Doctor Mayhew spoke. It startled and surprised us both. In a few minutes we separated, and retired to our several beds.

When I saw the idiot on the following day, I could perceive a marked improvement in his appearance. The deadly pallor of his countenance had departed; and although no healthy colour had taken its place, the living blood seemed again in motion, restoring expression to those wan and withered features. His coal-black eye had recovered the faintest power of speculation, and the presence of a stranger was now sufficient to call it into action. He was clean and properly attired, and he sat—apart from his keeper—conscious of existence. There was good ground, in the absence of all positive proof, for the supposition of the doctor. A common observer would have pronounced him well-born at a glance. Smitten as he was, and unhinged by his sad affliction, there remained still sufficient of the external forms to conduct to such an inference. Gracefulness still hovered about the human ruin, discernible in the most aimless of imbecility's weak movements, and the limbs were not those of one accustomed to the drudgery of life. A melancholy creature truly did he look, as I gazed upon him for a second time. He had carried his chair to a corner of the room, and there he sat, his face half-hidden, resting upon his breast, his knee drawn up and pressed tightly by his clasped hands—those very hands, small and marble-white, forming a ghastful contrast to the raven hair that fell thickly on his back. He had not spoken since he rose. Indeed, since his first appearance, he had said nothing but the unintelligible word which he had uttered four times in my presence, and which Dr. Mayhew now believed to be the name of the lady whose portrait he wore. That he could speak was certain, and his silence was therefore the effect of obstinacy or of absolute weakness of intellect, which forbade the smallest mental effort. I approached him, and addressed him in accents of kindness. He raised his head slowly, and looked piteously upon me, but in a moment again he resumed his original position.

For the space of a week I visited the afflicted man daily, remaining with him perhaps a couple of hours at each interview. No clue had been discovered to his history, and the worthy physician had fixed upon one day after another as that upon which he would relieve himself of his trust; but the day arrived only to find him unwilling to keep his word. The poor object himself had improved rapidly in personal appearance; and, as far as could be ascertained from his gestures and indistinct expressions, was sensible of his protector's charity, and thankful for it. He now attempted to give to his keeper the feeble aid he could afford him; he partook of his food with less avidity, he seemed aware of what was taking place around him. On one occasion I brought his dinner to him, and sat by whilst it was served to him. He stared at me as though he had immediate perception of something unusual. It was on the same day that, whilst trifling with a piece of broken glass, he cut his hand. I closed the wound with an adhesive plaster, and bound it up. It was the remembrance of this act that gained for me the affection of the creature, in whom all affections seemed dried up and dead. When, on the day that succeeded to this incident, Robin, as was his custom, placed before the idiot his substantial meal, the latter turned away from it offended, and would not taste it. I was sent for. The eyes of the imbecile glistened when I entered the apartment, and he

beckoned me to him. I sat at his side, as I had done on the day before, and he then, with a smile of triumph, took his food on his knees, and soon devoured it. When he had finished, and Robin had retired with the tray and implements, the poor fellow made me draw my chair still nearer to his own. He placed his hand upon my knee in great delight, patted it, and then the wound which I had dressed. There was perfect folly in the mode in which he fondled this, and yet a reasonableness which the heart could not fail to detect and contemplate with emotion. First, he gently stroked it, then placed his head upon it in utmost tenderness, then hugged it in his arm, and rocked it as a child, then kissed it often with short quick kisses that could scarce be heard; courting my observation with every change of action, making it apparent how much he loved, what care he could bestow, upon the hand which had won the notice and regard of his new friend and benefactor. This over, he pointed to his breast, dallied for a time, and then drew from it the picture which he so jealously carried there. He pressed it between his hands, sighed heavily from his care-crazed heart, and strove to tell his meaning in words which would not flow, in which he knew not how to breathe the bubble-thought that danced about his brain. Closer than ever he approached me, and, with an air which he intended for one of confidence and great regard, he invited me to look upon his treasure. I did so, and, to my astonishment and terror, gazed upon the portrait of the unhappy EMMA HARRINGTON. Gracious God! what thoughts came rushing into my mind! It was impossible to err. I, who had passionately dwelt upon those lineaments in all the fondness of a devoted love, until the form became my heart's companion by day and by night—I, who had watched the tear-drops falling from those eyes, in which the limner had not failed to fix the natural sorrow that was a part of them—watched and hung upon them in distress and agony—I, surely I, could not mistake the faithful likeness. Who, then, was he that wore it? Who was this now standing at my side, to turn to whom again became immediately—sickness—horror! Who could it be but him, the miserable parricide—the outcast—the unhappy brother—the desperately wicked son? There was no other in the world to whom the departed penitent could be dear; and he—oh, was it difficult to suppose that merciful Heaven, merciful to the guiltiest, had placed between his conscience and his horrible offence a cloud that made all dim—had rendered his understanding powerless to comprehend a crime which reason must have punished and aggravated endlessly? My judgment was prostrated by what I learned so suddenly and fearfully. The discovery had been miraculous. What should I do? How proceed? How had the youth got here? What had been his history since his flight? Whither was he wandering? Did he know the fate of his poor sister? How had he lived? These questions and others crowded into my mind one after another, and I trembled with the violent rapidity of thought. The figure of the unhappy girl presented itself—her words vibrated on my ears—her last dying accents; and I felt that to me was consigned the wretched object of her solicitude and love—that to me Providence had directed the miserable man; yes, if only that he who had shared in the family guilt, might behold and profit by the living witness of the household wreck. Half forgetful of the presence of the brother, and remembering nothing well but her and her most pitiable tale, oppressed by a hundred recollections, I pronounced her name.

"Poor, poor, much-tried Emma!" I ejaculated, gazing still upon her image.

The idiot leaped from my side at the word, and clapped his hands, and

laughed and shrieked. He ran to me again, and seized my palm, and pressed it to his lips. His excitement was unbounded. He could only point to the picture, endeavour to repeat the word which I had spoken, and direct his finger to my lips beseechingly, as though he *prayed* to hear the sound again. Alarmed already at what I had done, and dreading the consequences of a disclosure, because ignorant of the effect it would produce upon the idiot, I checked myself immediately, and spake no more. Robin returned. I contrived to subdue by degrees the sudden ebullition, and having succeeded, I restored the criminal to his keeper, and departed.

It was, however, necessary that I should act in some way, possessed of the information which had so strangely come to me. I desired to be alone to collect myself, and to determine quietly. I retired to my bedroom, endeavoured to think composedly, and to mark out the line of duty. It was a fruitless undertaking. My mind would rest on nothing but the tragedy in which this miserable creature held so sad a part, and his unlooked-for resuscitation here—here, under the roof which sheltered his sister's paramour. Whether to keep the secret hidden in my bosom, or to communicate it to the physician, was my duty, I could not settle now. It had been a parting injunction of my friend Thompson to sleep upon all matters of difficulty, and to avoid rashness above all things. Alas! I had not profited by his counsel, nor, in my own case, recurred to it even for a moment; but it was different now. The fate, perhaps the life, of another was involved in my decision; and not to act upon the good advice, not to be temperate and cautious, would be sinful in the extreme. What, had she been alive, would the sister have required—entreated at my hands? And now, if the freed spirit of the injured one looked down upon the world, what would it expect from him to whom had been committed the forlorn and stricken wanderer? What, if not justice, charity, and mercy? "And he shall have it!" I exclaimed. "I will act on his behalf. I will be cool and calm. I will do nothing until to-morrow, when the excitement of this hour shall have passed away, and reason resumed its proper influence and rule."

I rose, contented with my conclusion, and walked to the window, which overlooked the pleasure-garden of the house. Robin and his patient were there; the former sitting on a garden-chair and reposing comfortably after his meal, heedless of the doings of his charge. The latter stood immediately below the window, gazing upwards, with the portrait as before pressed between his marble hands. He perceived me and screamed in triumph and delight. The keeper started up; I vanished instantly. He surely could not have known the situation of my room—could not have waited there and watched for my appearance. It was impossible. Yes, I said so, and I attempted to console myself with the assurance; but my blood curdled with a new conviction that arose and clung to me, and would not be cast off—the certainty that, by the utterance of one word, I had, for good or ill, linked to my future destiny the reasonless and wretched being, who stood and shrieked beneath the casement long after I was gone.

I joined my friend, the doctor, as usual in the evening, and learned from him the news of the day. He had visited his patient at the parsonage, and he spoke favourably of her case. Although she had been told of my absence, she was still not aware that I had quitted the house for ever. Her father thought she was less unquiet, and believed that in a few days all would be forgotten, and she would be herself again. Dr. Mayhew assured me that nothing could be kinder than the manner in which the incumbent spoke of me, and that it was impossible for any man to feel a

favour more deeply than he appeared to appreciate the consideration which I had shown for him. The doctor had been silent as to my actual presence in the vicinity, which, he believed, to have mentioned would have been to fill the anxious father's heart with alarms and fears, which, groundless as they were, might be productive of no little mischief. I acquiesced in the propriety of his silence, and thanked him for his prudence. Whilst my friend was speaking, I heard a quick and heavy footstep on the stairs, which, causing me to start upon the instant, and hurling sickness to my heart, clearly told, had doubt existed, how strongly apprehension had fixed itself upon me, and how certainly and inextricably I had become connected with the object of my dark and irresistible conceptions. I had no longer an ear for Doctor Mayhew, but the sense followed the footstep until it reached the topmost stair—passed along the passage—and stopped——suddenly at our door. Almost before it stopped, the door was knocked at violently—quickly—loudly. Before an answer could be given, the door itself was opened, and Robin rushed in—scared.

"What is the matter?" I exclaimed, jumping up, and dreading to hear him tell what I felt must come—another tale of horror—another crime—what less than *self-destruction?*

"He's gone, sir—he's gone!" roared the fellow, white as death, and shaking like an aspen.

"Gone—how—who?" enquired the doctor.

"The madman," answered Robin, opening his mouth, and raising his eyebrows, to exhibit his own praiseworthy astonishment at the fact.

"Go on, man," said the doctor. "What have you to say further? How did it happen? Quick!"

"I don't know, sir. I ate something for dinner as disagreed. I have been as sleepy as an owl ever since. We was together in his room, and I just sot down for a minute thinking what it could be as I *had* eaten, when I dozed off directly—and when I opened my eyes again, not quite a minute arterwards, I couldn't find him nowheres—and nobody can't neither, and we've been searching the house for the last half hour."

"Foolish fellow—how long was this ago?"

"About an hour, sir.' '

The doctor said not another word, but taking a candle from the table, quitted the room, and hurried down stairs. I followed him, and Robin, almost frightened out of his wits, trod upon my heel and rubbed against my coat, in his eagerness not to be left behind me. The establishment was, as it is said, at sixes and sevens. All was disorder and confusion, and hustling into the most remote corner of the common room. Mr. Williams especially was very much unsettled. He stood in the rear of everybody else, and looked deathly white. It was he who ejaculated something upon the sudden entrance of his master, and was the cause of all the other ejaculations which followed quickly from every member of the household. Doctor Mayhew commanded order, and was not long in bringing it about. The house was searched immediately. Wherever it was supposed that the idiot might hide himself, diligent enquiry was made; cupboards, holes, corners, and cellars. It was in vain. He certainly had escaped. The gardens and paddocks, and fields adjacent, were scoured, and with like success. There was no doubt of it—the idiot was gone—who could tell whither? After two hours' unprofitable labour, Doctor Mayhew was again in his library, very much disturbed in mind, and reproaching himself bitterly for his procrastination. "Had I acted," said he, "upon my first determination, this would never have happened, and my part in the business would have been faithfully performed. As it is,

if any mischief should come to that man, I shall never cease to blame myself, and to be considered the immediate cause of it." I made no reply. I could say nothing. His escape, occurring so soon after my identification of the unfortunate creature, had bewildered and confounded me. I could not guess at the motive of his flight, nor conceive a purpose to which it was likely the roused maniac would aspire; but I was satisfied—yes, too satisfied, for to think of it was to chill and freeze the heart's warm blood —that the revelation of the day and his removal were in close connexion. Alas, I dared not speak, although my fears distracted me whilst I continued dumb! Arrangements were at last made for watching both within and without the house during the night—messengers were dispatched to the contiguous villages, and all that could be done for the recovery of the runaway was attempted. It was already past twelve o'clock when Dr. Mayhew insisted upon my retiring to rest. I did not oppose his wish. He was ill at ease, and angry with himself. Maintaining the silence which I had kept during the evening, I gave him my hand, and took my leave.

I thought I should have dropped dead in the room when, lost in a deep reverie, I opened my chamber-door, and discovered, sitting at the table, the very man himself. *There the idiot sat*, portrait in hand, encountering me with a look of unutterable sorrowfulness. He must have hid himself amongst the folds of the curtains; for this room, as well as the rest, was looked into, and its cupboards investigated. I recoiled with sudden terror, and retreated, but the wretch clasped his hands in agony, and implored me, in gestures which could not be mistaken, to remain. I recovered, gained confidence, and forbore.

"What do you desire with me?" I asked quickly. "Can you speak? Do you understand me?" The unhappy man dropped on his knees, and took my hand—cried like a beaten child—sobbed and groaned. He raised the likeness of his sister to my eyes, and then I saw the fire sparkling in his own lustrous orb, and the supplication bursting from it, that was not to be resisted. He pointed to his mouth, compelled an inarticulate sound, and looked at me again, to assure me that he had spoken all his faculties permitted him. He waited for my answer.

Melted with pity for the bruised soul before me, I could no longer deny him the gratification he besought.

"Emma!" I ejaculated; "Emma Harrington."

He wept aloud, and kissed my hand, and put my arm upon his breast, and caressed it with his own weak head. I permitted the affectionate creature to display his childish gratitude, and then, taking him by the wrist, I withdrew from the room. An infant could not have been more docile with its nurse. In another moment he was again in custody.

It was in vain that I strove to fall asleep, and to forget the circumstances of the day—in vain that I endeavoured to carry out the resolution which I had taken to my pillow. Gladly would I have expelled all thought of the idiot from my mind, and risen on the morrow, prepared by rest and sweet suspension of mental labour for profitable deliberation. Sound as was the advice of my friend, and anxious as I was to follow it, obedience rested not with me, and was impossible. Should I make known the history of the man? Should I discover his crime? This was the question that haunted my repose, and knocked at my ears until my labouring brain ached in its confusion. What might be the effect of a disclosure upon the future existence of the desolate creature, should he ever recover his reason? Must he not suffer the extreme penalty of the law? It was dreadful to think that his life should be forfeited through, and only through, my

agency. There were reasons again, equally weighty, why I should not conceal the facts which were in my possession. How I should have determined at length, I know not, if an argument—founded on selfishness—had not stepped in and turned the balance in favour of the idiot. Alas, how easy is it to decide when self-interest interposes with its intelligence and aid! Neither Mr. Fairman nor Doctor Mayhew knew of my connexion with the unfortunate Emma Harrington. To expose the brother would be to commit myself. I was not yet prepared to acknowledge to the father of Miss Fairman or to his friend, the relation that I had borne to that poor girl. And why not? If to divulge the secret were an act of justice, why should I hesitate to do it on account of the incumbent, with whom I had broken off all intercourse for ever? Ah, did I in truth believe that our separation had been final? Or did I harbour, perhaps against reason and conviction, a hope, a thought of future reconciliation, a shadowy yet not weak belief that all might yet end happily, and that fortune still might favour love? With such faint hope, and such belief, I must have bribed myself to silence; for I left my couch resolved to keep my secret close. Doctor Mayhew was deep in the contemplation of a map when I joined him at the breakfast table. He did not take his eyes from it when I entered the apartment, and he continued his investigations some time after I had taken my seat. He raised his head at last, and looked hard at me, apparently without perceiving me, and then he resumed his occupation without having spoken a syllable: after a further study of five or ten minutes, he shook his head, and pressed his lips, and frowned, and stroked his chin, as though he was just arriving at the borders of a notable and great discovery.

"It will be strange indeed!" he muttered to himself. "How can we find it out?"

I did not break the thread of cogitation.

"Well," continued Doctor Mayhew, "he must leave this house at all events. I will run the risk of losing him no longer. I will write this morning to the overseer. Yet I *should* like to know—really—it may be, after all, the case. Stukely, lad, look here. What county is this?" he continued, placing his finger on the map.

Somerset was written in the corner of it, and accordingly I answered.

"Very well," replied the doctor. "Now, look here. Read this. What do these letters spell?"

He pointed to some small characters, which formed evidently the name of a village that stood upon the banks of a river of some magnitude. I spelt them as he desired, and pronounced, certainly to my own surprise, the word —"*Belton.*"

"Just so. Well, what do you say to that? I think I have hit it. That's the fellow's home. I never thought of that before, and I shouldn't now, if I hadn't had occasion for the road-book. It was the first thing that caught my eye. Now—how can we find it out?"

"It is difficult!" said I.

"It is likely enough, you see. What should bring him so far westward, if he hadn't some object? He was either wandering from or to his home, depend upon it, when the gipsies found him. If Belton be his home, his frequent repetition of the word was natural enough. Eh, don't you see it?"

"Certainly," said I.

"Very well; then, what's to be done?"

"I cannot tell," I answered.

The doctor rang the bell.

"Is Robin up yet?" he asked, when Williams came in to answer it.

"He is, sir."

"And the man?"

"Both, sir. They have just done breakfast."

"Very well, Williams, you may go. Now, follow me, Stukely," continued the physician, the moment that the butler had departed. "I'll do it now. I am a physiognomist, and I'll tell you in the twinkling of an eye if we are right. You mark him well, and so will I." The doctor seized his map and road-book, and before I could speak was out of the room. When I overtook him, he had already reached the idiot, and dismissed Robin.

My friend commenced his operations by placing the map and book upon the table, and closely scanning the countenance of his patient, in order to detect and fix the smallest alteration of expression in the coming examination. He might have spared himself the trouble. The idiot had no eye for him. When I appeared he ran to me, and manifested the most extravagant delight. He grasped my hand, and drew me to his chair, and there detained me. He did not introduce his treasure; but I could not fail to perceive that he intended to repeat the scene of the previous day as soon as we were again alone. I did not wish to afford him opportunity, and I gladly complied with the physician's request when he called upon me to interrogate the idiot in the terms he should employ. He had already himself applied to the youth; but neither for himself nor his questions could he obtain the slightest notice. The eye, the heart, and, such as it was, the mind of the idiot, were upon his sister's friend.

"Ask him, Stukely," began the doctor, "if he has ever been in Somerset."

I did so, and, in truth, the word roused from their long slumber, or we believed they did, recollections that argued well for the physician's theory. The idiot raised his brow, and smiled.

The doctor referred to his map, and said, whispering as before, "Mention the river Parret."

I could not doubt that the name had been familiar to the unhappy man. He strove to speak, and could not; but he nodded his head affirmatively and quickly, and the expression of his features corroborated the strong testimony.

"Now—*Belton!*" added the doctor.

I repeated the word, and then the agony of supplication which I had witnessed once before was re-enacted, and the shrill and incoherent cries burst from his afflicted breast.

"I am satisfied!" exclaimed the doctor, shutting his book. "He shall leave my house for Belton this very afternoon."

And so he did. In an hour arrangements were in progress for his departure, and I was his guardian and companion. Robin, as soon as Dr. Mayhew's intention was known, refused to have anything more to say, either inside the house or out of it, to the *devil incarnate*, as he was pleased to call the miserable man. If his place depended upon his taking charge of him, he was ready to resign it. There was not another man whom the physician seemed disposed to trust, and in his difficulty he glanced at me. I understood his meaning. He proceeded to express his surprise and pleasure at finding an attachment so strong towards me on the part of the idiot. "It was remarkable," he said—"very! And what a pity it was that he hadn't cultivated the same regard for somebody else. A short journey then, to Somerset, would have been the easiest thing in the world. Nothing but to pop into the coach, to go to an inn on arriving in

Belton, and to make enquiries, which, no doubt, would be satisfactorily answered in less than no time. Yes, really, it was a hundred pities!"

The doctor looked at me again, and then I had already determined to meet the request he was not bold to ask. I believed, equally with the physician, from the conduct and expressions of young Harrington, that the riddle of his present condition waited for explanation in the village whose name seemed like a load upon his heart, and constituted the whole of his discourse since he had arrived amongst us. It was there he yearned to be. It was necessary only to mention the word to throw him into an agitation which it took hours entirely to dissipate. Yes, for a reason well known to him, and hidden from us all, his object, his only object as it appeared, was to be removed and to be conducted thither. I had but one reason for rejecting the otherwise well-sustained hypothesis of my friend. During my whole intercourse with Emma, I had never heard her speak of Somerset or Belton, and in her narrative no allusion was made either to the shire or village. In what way, then, could it be so intimately connected with her brother—whence was the origin of the hold which this one word had taken of his shattered brain? I could not guess. But, on the other hand, it was true that I was ignorant of his history subsequently to the fearful death of his most sinful father. How could I tell what new events had arisen, what fresh relations might have sprung up, to attach and bind him to one particular spot of ground? Urged by curiosity to discover all that yet remained to know of his career, and more by a natural and strong desire to serve the youth—not to desert him in the hour of his extremity—I resolved, with the first hint of the doctor, to become myself the fellow-traveller of his *protégé*. I told him so, and the doctor shook me by the hand, and thanked me heartily.

That very evening we were on our road, for our preparations were not extensive. My instructions were to carry him direct to Belton, to ascertain, if possible, from his movements, the extent of his acquaintance with the village, and to present him at all places of resort in the hope of having him identified. Two days were granted for our stay. If he should be unknown we were then to return, and Doctor Mayhew would at once resign him to the parish. These were his words at parting. We had no opposition in the idiot. His happiness was perfect whilst I remained with him. He followed me eagerly whithersoever I went, and was willing to be led so long as I continued guide. I took my seat in the coach, and he placed himself at my side, trembling with joyousness and laughing convulsively. Once seated, he grasped my hand as usual, and did not, through the livelong night, relinquish it altogether. A hundred affectionate indications escaped him, and in the hour of darkness and of quiet it would have been easy to suppose that an innocent child was nestling near me, *homeward bound*, and, in the fulness of its expectant bliss, lavish of its young heartfelt endearments. Yes, it would have been, but for other thoughts, blacker than the night itself—how much more fearful!—which rendered every sign of fondness a hollow, cold, and dismal mockery. Innocence! Alas, poor parricide!

In the morning the sun streamed into the coach, of which we were the only inside passengers. Dancing and playing came the light, now here, now there, skipping along the seat, and settling nowhere—cheerful visitant, and to the idiot something more; for he gazed upon it, and followed its fairy motion, lost in wonder and delight. He looked from the coach-window, and beheld the far-spreading fields of beauty with an eye awakened from long lethargy and inaction. He could not gaze enough. And the voice of nature made giddy the sense of hearing that drank intoxication

from the notes of birds, the gurgling of a brook, the rustling of a thousand leaves. His feeble powers, taken by surprise, were vanquished by the summer's loveliness. Once, when our coach stopped, a peasant girl approached us with a nosegay, which she entreated me to buy. My fellow-traveller was impatient to obtain it. I gave it to him, and, for an hour, all was neglected for the toy. He touched the flowers one by one, viewed them attentively and lovingly, as we do children whom we have known, and watched, and loved from infancy—now caressing this, now smiling upon that. What recollections did they summon in the mind of the destitute and almost mindless creature? What pictures rose there?—pictures that may never be excluded from the soul of man, however dim may burn the intellectual light. His had been no happy boyhood; yet, in the wilderness of his existence, there must have been vouchsafed to him in mercy the few green spots that serve to attach to earth the most afflicted and forlorn of her sad children. How natural for the glimpses to revisit the broken heart, thus employed, thus roused and animated by the light of heaven, rendering all things beautiful and glad!

As we approached the village, my companion ceased to regard his many-coloured friends with the same exclusive attention and unmixed delight. His spirits sank—his joy fled. Clouds gathered across his brow; he withdrew his hand from mine, and he sat for an hour, brooding. He held the neglected nosegay before him, and plucked the pretty leaves one by one—not conscious, I am sure, of what he did. In a short time every flower was destroyed, and lay in its fragments before him. Then, as if stung by remorse for the cruel act, or shaken by the heavy thoughts that pressed upon his brain, he covered his pallid face, and groaned bitterly. What were those thoughts? How connected with the resting-place towards which we were hastening rapidly? My own anxiety became intense.

The village of Belton, situated near the mouth, and at the broadest part, of the river Parret, consisted of one long narrow street, and a few houses scattered here and there on the small eminences which sheltered it. The adjacent country was of the same character as that which we had quitted—less luxuriant, perhaps, but still rich and striking. We arrived at mid-day. I determined to alight at the inn at which the coach put up, and to make my first inquiries there. From the moment that we rattled along the stones that formed the entrance to the village, an unfavourable alteration took place in my companion. He grew excited and impatient; and his lips quivered, and his eyes sparkled, as I had never seen them before. I was satisfied that he had reached the object of his long desire, and that in a few minutes the mysterious relation in which he stood to the place would be ascertained. "He MUST be known," I continued to repeat to myself; "the first eye that falls on him will recognise him instantly." We reached the inn; we alighted. The landlord and the ostler came to the coach-door, and received us with extreme civility. The former assisted the idiot in his eager endeavour to reach the ground—I watched the action, expecting him to start, to speak, to claim acquaintance; and, having completed the polite attention, he stood smiling and scraping. I looked at him, then at the idiot, and saw at once that they were strangers. A dozen idlers stood about the door. I waited for a recognition: none came.

Seated in the parlour of the inn, I asked to see the landlady. The sight of the idiot caused as little emotion in her, as it had produced in her husband. I ordered dinner for him. Whilst it was preparing, I engaged the landlord in conversation at the door. I did not wish to speak before young Harrington. I dared not leave him. I enquired, first, if the face of the

idiot were familiar to him. I received for answer, that the man had never seen him in his life before, nor had his wife.

"Do you know the name of Harrington?" said I.

"No—never heard on it," was the reply.

"Fitzjames, perhaps?"

"Many Jameses hereabouts, sir," said the landlord, "but none of that there Christian name."

The excitement of the idiot did not abate. He would not touch his food nor sit quietly; but he walked swiftly up and down the room, breathing heavily, and trembling with increasing agitation. He urged me in his own peculiar way to leave the house and walk abroad. He pointed to the road, and strove to speak. The attempt was fruitless, and he paced the room again, wringing his hands, and sighing sorrowfully. At length I yielded to his request, and we were again in the village, I following whithersoever he led me. He ran through the street, like a madman, as he was, bringing upon him the eyes of every one, and outstripping me speedily. He stopped for a moment to collect himself—looked round as though he had lost his way, and knew not whither to proceed; then bounded off again, the hunted deer not quicker in his flight, and instantly was out of sight. Without the smallest hope of seeing him again, I pursued the fugitive, and, as well, as I could guess it, continued in his track. For half a mile I traced his steps, and then I lost them. His last footmark was at the closed gate of a good-sized dwelling-house. The roof and highest windows only of the habitation were to be discerned from the path, and these denoted the residence of a wealthy man. He could have no business here—no object. "He must have passed," thought I, "upon the other side." I was about to cross the road, when I perceived, at the distance of a few yards, a man labouring in a field. I accosted him, and asked if he had seen the idiot.

No—he had not. He was sure that nobody had passed him for hours. He must have seen the man if he had come that way.

"Whose house is that?" I asked, not knowing *why* I asked the question.

"What? that?" said he, pointing to the gate. "Oh, that's Squire *Temple's!*"

The name dropped like a knife upon my heart. I could not speak. I must have fallen to the earth, if the man, seeing me grow pale as death, had not started to his feet and intercepted me. I trembled with a hundred apprehensions. My throat was dry with fright, and I thought I should have choked. What follows was like a hideous dream. The gate was opened suddenly. JAMES TEMPLE issued from it, and passed me like an arrow. He was appalled and terror-stricken. Behind him—within six feet—almost upon him, yelling fearfully, was the brother of the girl he had betrayed and ruined—his friend and schoolfellow, the miserable Frederick Harrington. I could perceive that he held aloft, high over his head, the portrait of his sister. It was all I saw and could distinguish. Both shot by me. I called to the labourer to follow; and, fast as my feet could carry me, I went on. Temple fell. Harrington was down with him. I reached the spot. The hand of the idiot was on the chest of the seducer, and the picture was thrust in agony before his shuddering eyes. There was a struggle—the idiot was cast away, and Temple was once more dashing onward. On, on!—after him! shrieked the idiot. They reached the river's edge. "What now—what now?" I exclaimed, beholding them from afar, bewildered and amazed. The water does not restrain the scared spirit of the pursued. He rushes on, leaps in, and trusts to the swift cur-

rent. So also the pursuer, who, with one long, loud exclamation of triumph, still with his treasure in his grasp, springs vehemently forward, and sinks, once and for ever. And the betrayer beats his way onward, aimless and exhausted, but still he nears the shore. Shall he reach it? Never!

PART THE LAST.

TRANQUILLITY.

"Mourn not for her! for what hath life to give
That should detain her ready spirit here?
Thinkest thou that it were worth a wish to live,
Could wishes hold her from her proper sphere?
That simple heart, that innocence sincere
The world would stain. Fitter she ne'er could be
For the great change; and now that change is near,
Oh! who would keep her soul from being free?
Maiden, beloved of Heav'n, to die is best for thee."

SOUTHEY.

"Time on this head hath snow'd, yet still 'tis borne
Aloft, nor thinks but on another's grave."

YOUNG.

THE sudden and unlooked-for appearance of James Temple threw light upon a mystery. Further explanation awaited me in the house from which the unfortunate man had rushed to meet instant death and all its consequences. It will be remembered that, in the narrative of his victim, mention is made of one Mrs. Wybrow, with whom the poor girl, upon the loss of her father, and of all means of support, obtained a temporary home. It appeared that Frederick Harrington, a few months after his flight, returned secretly to the village, and, at the house of that benevolent woman, made earnest application for his sister. He was then excited and half insane, speaking extravagantly of his views and his intentions in respect of her he came to take away. "She should be a duchess," he said, "and must take precedence of every lady in the land. He was a king himself, and could command it so. He could perform wonders, if he chose to use the power with which he was invested; but he would wait until his sister might reap the benefit of his acquired wealth." In this strain he continued, alarming the placid Mrs. Wybrow, who knew not what to do to moderate the wildness and the vehemence of his demeanour. Hoping, however, to appease him, she told him of the good fortune of his sister—how she had obtained a happy home, and how grateful he ought to be to Providence for its kind care of her. Much more she said, only to increase the anger of the man, whose insane pride was roused to fury the moment that he heard his sister was doomed to eat the bread of a dependent. He disdained the assistance of Mrs. Temple—swore it was an artifice, a cheat, and that he would drag her from the net into which they had enticed her. When afterwards he learned that it was through the mediation of James Temple that his sister had been provided for, the truth burst instantly upon him, and he foresaw at once all that actually took place. He vowed that he would become him-

self the avenger of his sister, and that he would not let her betrayer sleep until he had wrung from him deep atonement for his crime. It was in vain that Mrs. Wybrow sought to convince him of his delusion. He would not be advised—he would not listen—he would not linger another moment in the house, but quitted it, wrought to the highest pitch of rage, and speaking only of vengeance on the seducer. He set out for London. Mrs. Wybrow, agitated more than she had been at any time since her birth, and herself almost deprived of reason by her fears for the safety of Miss Harrington, James Temple, and the furious lunatic himself, wrote immediately to Emma, then resident in Cambridge, explaining the sad condition of her brother, and warning her of his approach—Emma having already (without acquainting Mrs. Wybrow with her fallen state) forwarded her address, with a strict injunction to her humble friend to convey to her all information of her absent brother which she could possibly obtain. The threatened danger was communicated to the lover—darkened his days for a time with anxiety and dread, but ceased as time wore on, and as no visitant appeared to affect the easy tenor of his immoral life. The reader will not have forgotten, perhaps, that when for the first time I beheld James Temple, he was accompanied by an elder brother. It was from the latter, his friend and confidante, that the above particulars, and those which follow in respect of the deceased, were gathered. The house in which, for a second time, I encountered my ancient college friends, was their uncle's. Parents they had none. Of father and of mother both they had been deprived in infancy; and, from that period, their home had been with their relative and guardian. The conduct of one charge, at least, had been from boyhood such as to cause the greatest pain to him who had assumed a parent's cares. Hypocrisy, sensuality, and—for his years and social station—unparalleled dishonesty, had characterised James Temple's short career. By some inexplicable tortuosity of mind, with every natural endowment, with every acquired advantage, graced with the borrowed as well as native ornaments of humanity, he found no joy in his inheritance, but sacrificed it all, and crawled through life a gross and earthy man. The seduction of Emma, young as he was when he committed that offence, was, by many, not the first crime for which—not, thank Heaven! without some preparation for his trial—he was called suddenly to answer. As a boy, he had grown aged in vice. It has been stated that he quitted the university the very instant he disencumbered himself of the girl whom he had sacrificed. He crept to the metropolis, and for a time there hid himself. But it was there that he was discovered by Frederick Harrington, who had pursued the destroyer with a perseverance that was indomitable, and scoffed at disappointment. How the lunatic existed no one knew; how he steered clear of transgression and restraint was equally difficult to explain. It was evident enough that he made himself acquainted with the haunts of his former schoolfellow; and, in one of them, he rushed furiously and unexpectedly upon him, affrighted his intended victim, but failing in his purpose of vengeance by the very impetuosity of his assault. Temple escaped. Then it was that the latter, shaken by fear, revealed to his brother the rise and progress of his intimacy with the discarded girl, and, in his extremity, called upon him for advice and help. He could afford him none; and the seducer found himself in the world without an hour's happiness or quiet. What quails so readily as the heartless soul of the sensualist? Who so cowardly as the man only courageous in his oppression of the weak? The spirit of Temple was laid prostrate. He walked, and ate, and slept, in base and dastard fear. Locks and bolts could not secure him from dismal apprehensions. A sound shook him, as the unseen wind makes the tall poplar

shudder—a voice struck terror in his ear, and sickness to his recreant heart. He could not be alone—for alarm was heightened by the speaking conscience that pronounced it just. He journeyed from place to place, his brother ever at his side, and the shadow of the avenger ever stalking in the rear, and impelling the weary wanderer still onward. The health of the sufferer gave way. To preserve his life, he was ordered to the south-western coast. His faithful brother was his companion still. He had not received a week's benefit from the mild and grateful climate—he was scarcely settled in the tranquil village in which they had fixed their residence, before the old terror was made manifest, and hunted the unhappy man away. Whilst sitting at his window, and gazing upon the broad and smooth blue sea—the sick man's notice was invited to a crowd of yelling boys, who had amongst them one, the tallest of their number, whom they dragged along for punishment or sport. He was an idiot. WHO he was none knew so well as the pale man that looked upon him, who could not drag his eye away, so lost was it in wonder, so transfixed with horror. The invalid remained no longer there. Fast as horses could convey him, he journeyed homeward; and, in the bosom of his natural protectors, he sought for peace he could not gain elsewhere. Here he remained, the slave of fear, the conscience-stricken, diseased in body—almost spent; and here he would have died, had not Providence directed the impotent mind of the imbecile to the spot, and willed it otherwise. I have narrated, as shortly as I might, the history of my earliest college friend, as I received it from his brother's lips. There remained but a few words to say—the pleasantest that I have had to speak of him. James Temple did not die a hardened man. If there be truth in tears, in prayers of penitence that fall from him who stands upon the borders of eternity—who can gain nothing by hypocrisy, and may lose by it the priceless treasure of an immortal soul—if serenity and joy are signs of a repentance spoken, a forgiveness felt, then Heaven had assuredly been merciful with the culprit, and had remitted his offences, as Heaven can, and will, remit the vilest.

I remained in the village of Belton until I saw all that remained of the school-fellows deposited in the earth. Their bodies had been easily obtained—that of the idiot, indeed, before life had quitted it. The evening that followed their burial, I passed with William Temple. Many a sad reminiscence occurred to him which he communicated to me without reserve, many a wanton act of coarse licentiousness, many a warning unheeded, laughed at, spurned. It is a mournful pleasure for the mind, as it dwells upon the doings of the departed, to build up its own theories, and to work out a history of what might have been in happier circumstances—a useless history of *ifs*. "If my brother had been looked to when he was young," said William Temple more than once, "he would have turned out differently. My uncle spoiled him. As a child, he was never corrected. If he wished for a toy, he had but to scream for it. If, at school, he had been fortunate enough to contract his friendships with young men of worth and character, their example would have won him to rectitude, for he was always a lad easily led." And again, "If he had but listened to the advice which, when it would have served him, I did not fail daily and hourly to offer him, he might have lived for years, and been respected—for many know, I lost no opportunity to draw him from his course of error." Vain idle talk! I journeyed homeward. When I arrived at the house of Dr. Mayhew, I was surprised to find how little I could remember of the country over which I had travelled. The scenes through which I had passed were forgotten—had not been noticed. Absorbed by the thoughts

which possessed my brain, I had suffered myself to be carried forward, conscious of nothing but the waking dreams. I was prepared, however, to see my friend. Still influenced by the latent hope of meeting once more with Miss Fairman, still believing in the happy issue of my love, I had resolved to keep my own connexion with the idiot as secret as the grave. There was no reason why I should betray myself. His fate was independent of my act—my conduct formed no link in the chain which must be presented to make the history clear: and shame would have withheld the gratuitous confession, had not the ever-present, never-dying promise forbade the disclosure of one convicting syllable. As may be supposed, the surprise of Doctor Mayhew, upon hearing the narrative, was no less than the regret which he experienced at the violent death of the poor creature in whom he had taken so kind and deep an interest. But a few days sufficed to lessen his concern for one who had come to him a stranger, and whom he had known so short a time. The pursuits and cares of life gradually withdrew the incident from his mind, and all thoughts of the idiot. He ceased to speak of him. To me the last scene of his life was present for many a year. I could not remove it. By day and night it came before my eyes, without one effort on my part to invoke it. It has started up, suddenly and mysteriously, in the midst of enjoyment and serene delight, to mingle bitterness in the cup of earthly bliss. It has come in the season of sorrow to heighten the distress. Amongst men, and in the din of business, the vision has intruded, and in solitude it has followed me to throw its shadows across the bright green fields, beautiful in their freshness. Night after night—I cannot count their number—it has been the form and substance of my dreams; and I have gone to rest—yes, for months—with the sure and natural expectation of beholding the melancholy repetition of an act which I would have given anything, and all I had, to forget and drive away for ever.

A week passed pleasantly with my host. I spoke of departure at the end of it. He smiled when I did so, bade me hold my tongue and be patient. I suffered another week to glide away, and then hinted once more that I had trespassed long enough upon his hospitality. The doctor placed his hand upon my arm, and answered quickly, "all in good time—do not hurry." His tone and manner confirmed, I know not why, the strong hope within me, and his words passed with meaning to my heart. I already built upon the aërial foundation, and looked forward with joyous confidence and expectation. The arguments and shows of truth are few that love requires. The poorest logic is the soundest reasoning—if it conclude for him. The visits to the parsonage were, meanwhile, continued. Upon my return, I gained no news. I asked if all were well there, and the simple monosyllable "Yes," answered with unusual quickness and decision, was all that escaped the doctor's lips. He did not wish to be interrogated further, and was displeased. I perceived this, and was silent. For some days, no mention was made of his dear friend and minister. He was accustomed to speak often of that man, and most affectionately. What was the inference? A breach had taken place. If I entertained the idea for a day, it was dissipated on the next; for the doctor, a week having elapsed since his last visit, rode over to the parsonage as usual, remained there some hours, and returned in his best and gayest spirits. He spoke of the Fairmans during the evening with the same kind feeling and good-humour that had always accompanied his allusions to them and their proceedings, and grew at length eloquent in the praises of them both. The increasing beauty of the young mistress, he said, was marvellous. "Ah," he added slyly, and with more truth, perhaps, than he suspected, "it would have

done your eyes good to-day, only to have got one peep at her." I sighed, and he tantalized me further. He pretended to pity me for the inconsiderate haste with which I had thrown up my employment, and to condole with me for all I had lost in consequence. "As for himself," he said, "he had, upon further consideration, given up all thought of marriage for the present. He should live a little longer and grow wiser; but it was not a pleasant thing, by any means, to see so sweet a girl taken coolly off by a young fellow, who, if all he heard was true, was very likely to have an early opportunity." I sighed again, and asked permission to retire to rest; but my tormentor did not grant it until he had spoken for half an hour longer, when he dismissed me in a state of misery incompatible with rest, in bed, or out of it. My heart was bursting when I left him. He could not fail to mark it. To my surprise, he made another excursion to the parsonage on the following day; and, as before, he joined me in the evening with nothing on his lips but commendation of the young lady whom he had seen, and complaint at the cruel act which was about to rob them of their treasure; for he said, regardless of my presence or the desperate state of my feelings, "that the matter was now all but settled. Fairman had made up his mind, and was ready to give his consent the very moment the young fellow was bold enough to ask it. And lucky dog he is too," added the kind physician, by way of a conclusion; "for little puss herself is over head and ears in love with him, or else I never made a right prognosis."

"I am much obliged to you, sir," I answered, when Dr. Mayhew paused; "very grateful for your hospitality. If you please, I will depart to-morrow. I trust you will ask me to remain no longer. I cannot do so. My business in London——"

"Oh, very well! but that can wait, you know," replied the doctor, interrupting me. "I can't spare you to-morrow. I have asked a friend to dinner, and you must meet him."

"Do not think me ungrateful, doctor," I answered; "but positively *I* must and will depart to-morrow. I cannot stay."

"Nonsense, man—you shall. Come, say you will, and I engage, if your intention holds, to release you as early as you like the next day. I have promised my friend that you will give him the meeting, and you must not refuse me. Let me have my way to-morrow, and you shall be your own master afterwards."

"Upon such terms, sir," I answered immediately, "it would be unpardonable if I persisted. You shall command me; on the following day I will seek my fortunes in the world again."

"Just so," replied the doctor, and so we separated.

The character of Dr. Mayhew was little known to me. His goodness of heart I had reason to be acquainted with; but his long-established love of jesting, his intense appreciation of a joke, practical or otherwise, I had yet to learn. In few men are united as happily as they were in him, a steady application to the business of the world, and an almost unrestrained indulgence in its harmless pleasantries. The grave doctor was a boy at his fireside. I spent my last day in preparing for my removal, and in rambling for some hours amongst the hills, with which I had become too familiar to separate without a pang. Long was our leave-taking. I lingered and hovered from nook to nook, until I had expended the latest moment which it was mine to give. With a burdened spirit I returned to the house, as my thoughts shifted to the less pleasing prospect afforded by my new position. I shuddered to think of London, and the fresh vicissitudes that awaited me.

It wanted but a few minutes to dinner when I stepped into the drawing-room. The doctor had just reached home, after being absent on professional duty since the morning. The visitor had already arrived; I had heard his knock whilst I was dressing. Having lost all interest in the doings of the place, I had not even cared to enquire his name. What was it to me? What difference could the chance visitor of a night make to me, who was on the eve of exile? None. I walked despondingly into the room, and advanced with distant civility towards the stranger. His face was from me, but he turned instantly upon hearing my step, and I beheld——Mr. Fairman. I could scarcely trust my eyes. I started and retreated. My reverend friend, however, betrayed neither surprise nor discomposure. He smiled kindly, held out his hand, and spoke as he was wont in the days of cordiality and confidence. What did it mean?

"It is a lovely afternoon, Stukely," began the minister, "worthy of the ripe summer in which it is born."

"It is, sir," I replied; "but I shall see no more of them," I added *instantly*, anxious to assure him that I was not lurking with sinister design so near the parsonage—that I was on the eve of flight. "I quit our friend to-morrow, and must travel many miles away."

"You will come to us, Stukely," answered Mr. Fairman mildly.

"Sir!" said I, doubting if I heard aright.

"Has Doctor Mayhew said nothing then?" he asked.

I trembled in every limb.

"Nothing, sir," I answered. "Oh, yes! I recollect—he did—he has—but what have I—I have no wish—no business——"

The door opened, and Dr. Mayhew himself joined us, rubbing his hands, and smiling, in the best of good tempers. In his rear followed the faithful Williams. Before a word of explanation could be offered, the latter functionary announced "*dinner*," and summoned us away. The presence of the servants during the meal interfered with the gratification of my unutterable curiosity. Mr. Fairman spoke most affably on different matters, but did not once revert to the previous subject of discourse. I was on thorns. I could not eat. I could not look at the minister without anxiety and shame; and whenever my eye caught that of the doctor, I was abashed by a look of meaning and good-humoured cunning, that was half intelligible and half obscure. Rays of hope penetrated to my heart's core, and illuminated my existence. The presence of Mr. Fairman could not be without a purpose. What was it, then? Oh, I dared not trust myself to ask the question! The answer bred intoxication and delight, too sweet for earth. What meant that wicked smile upon the doctor's cheek? He was too generous and good to laugh at my calamity. He could not do it. Yet the undisturbed demeanour of the minister confounded me. If there had been connected with this visit so important an object as that which I longed to believe was linked with it, there surely would have been some evidence in his speech and manner, and he continued as cheerful and undisturbed as if his mind were free from every care and weighty thought. "What can it mean?" I asked myself, again and again. "How can he coolly bid me to his house, after what has passed, after his fearful anxiety to get me out of it? Will he hazard another meeting with his beloved daughter?—Ah, I see it!" I suddenly and mentally exclaimed; "it is clear enough—she is absent—she is away. He wishes to evince his friendly disposition at parting, and now he can do it without risk or cost." It was a plain elucidation of the mystery—it was enough, and all my airy castles tumbled to the earth, and left me there in wretchedness. Glad was I when the dinner was concluded, and eager to withdraw. I had resolved

to decline, at the first opportunity, the invitation of the incumbent. I did not wish to grieve my heart in feasting my eyes upon a scene crowded with fond associations, to revoke feelings in which it would be folly to indulge again, and which it were well to annihilate and forget. I was about to beg permission to leave the table, when Dr. Mayhew rose; he looked archly at me when I followed his example, and requested me not to be in haste; "he had business to transact, and would rejoin us shortly." Saying these words, he smiled and vanished. I remained silent. To be left alone with Mr. Fairman, was the most annoying circumstance that could happen in my present mood. There were a hundred things which I burned to know, whilst I lacked the courage to enquire concerning one. But I had waited for an opportunity to decline his invitation. Here it was, and I had not power to lift my head and look at him. Mr. Fairman himself did not speak for some minutes. He sat thoughtfully, resting his forehead in the palm of his hand—his elbow on the table. At length he raised his eyes, and, whilst my own were still bent downward, I could feel that his were fixed upon me.

"Caleb," said the minister.

It was the first time that the incumbent had called me by my Christian name. How strangely it sounded from his lips! How exquisitely grateful it dropt upon my ear!

"Tell me, Caleb," continued Mr. Fairman, "did I understand you right? Is it true that Mayhew has told you nothing?"

"Nothing distinctly, sir," I answered—"I have gathered something from his hints, but I know not what he says in jest and what in earnest."

"I have only her happiness at heart, Stukely—from the moment that you spoke to me on the subject, I have acted solely with regard to that. I hoped to have smothered this passion in the bud. In attempting it, I believed I was acting as a father should, and doing my duty by her."

The room began to swim round me, and my head grew dizzy.

"I am to blame, perhaps, as Mayhew says, for having brought you together, and for surrounding her with danger. I should have known that to trifle with a heart so guileless and so pure was cruel and unjust, and fraught with perilous consequences. I was blind, and I am punished for my act."

I looked at him at length.

"I use the word deliberately—*punished*, Stukely. It *is* a punishment to behold the affection of which I have ever been too jealous, departing from me, and ripening for another. Why have I cared to live since Heaven took her mother to itself—but for her sake, for her welfare, and her love? But sorrow and regret are useless now. You do not know, young man, a thousandth part of your attainment when I tell you, you have gained her young and virgin heart. I oppose you no longer—I thwart not—render yourself worthy of the precious gift."

"I cannot speak, sir!" I exclaimed, seizing the hand of the incumbent in the wildness of my joy. "I am stupified by this intelligence! Trust me, sir—believe me, you shall find me not undeserving of your generosity and——"

"No, Stukely. Call it not by such a name. It is anything but that; there is no liberality, no nobility of soul, in giving you what I may not now withhold. I cannot see her droop and die, and live myself to know that a word from me had saved her. I have given my consent to the prosecution of your attachment at the latest moment—not because I wished it, but to prevent a greater evil. I have told you the truth! It was due

to us both that you should hear it; for the future look upon me as your father, and I will endeavour to do you justice."

There was a stop. I was so oppressed with a sense of happiness, that I could find no voice to speak my joy or tell my thanks. Mr. Fairman paused, and then continued.

"You will come to the parsonage to-morrow, and take part again in the instruction of the lads after their return. You will be received as my daughter's suitor. Arrangements will be made for a provision for you. Mayhew and I have it in consideration now. When our plan is matured, it shall be communicated to you. There need be no haste. You are both young—too young for marriage—and we shall not yet fix the period of your espousal."

My mind was overpowered with a host of dazzling visions, which rose spontaneously as the minister proceeded in his delightful talk. I soon lost all power of listening to details. The beloved Ellen, the faithful and confiding maiden, who had not deserted the wanderer although driven from her father's doors—she, the beautiful and priceless jewel of my heart, was present in every thought, and was the ornament and chief of every group that passed before my warm imagination. Whilst the incumbent continued to speak of the future, of his own sacrifice, and my great gain—whilst his words, without penetrating, touched my ears, and died away—my soul grew busy in the contemplation of the prize, which, now that it was mine, I scarce knew how to estimate. Where was she *then?* How had she been? To how many days of suffering and of trial may she have been doomed? How many pangs may have wrung that noble heart before its sad complaints were listened to, and mercifully answered? I craved to be at her side. The words which her father had spoken had loosened the heavy chain that tied me down—my limbs were conscious of their freedom—my spirit felt its liberty—what hindered instant flight? In the midst of my reverie Dr. Mayhew entered the room—and I remember distinctly that my immediate impulse was to leave the two friends together, and to run as fast as love could urge and feet could carry me—to the favoured spot which held all that I cared for now on earth. The plans, however, of Doctor Mayhew interfered with this desire. He had done much for me, more than I knew, and he was not the man to go without his payment. A long evening was yet before us, time enough for a hundred jokes, which I must hear, and witness, and applaud, or I was most unworthy of the kindness he had shown me. The business over for which Mr. Fairman had come expressly, the promise given of an early visit to the parsonage on the following day, an affectionate parting at the garden gate, and the incumbent proceeded on his homeward road. The doctor and I returned together to the house in silence, and one of us in partial fear; for I could see the coming sarcasm in the questionable smile that played about his lips. Not a word was spoken when we resumed our seats. At last he rang the bell, and Williams answered it——

"Book Mr. Stukely by the London coach to-morrow, Williams," said the master; "he *positively must and will depart to-morrow.*"

The criminal reprieved—the child, hopeless and despairing at the suffering parent's bed, and blessed at length with a firm promise of amendment and recovery, can tell the feelings that sustained my fluttering heart, beating more anxiously the nearer it approached its *home.* I woke that morning with the lark—yes, ere that joyous bird had spread its wing, and broke upon the day with its mad note—and I left the doctor's house whilst all within were sleeping. There was no rest for me

away from that abode, whose gates of adamant, with all their bars and fastenings, one magic word had opened—whose sentinels were withdrawn—whose terrors had departed. The hours were all too long until I claimed my new-found privilege. Morn of the mellow summer, how beautiful is thy birth! How soft—how calm—how breathlessly and blushingly thou stealest upon a slumbering world; fearful, as it seems, of startling it! How deeply quiet, and how soothing, are thy earliest sounds—scarce audible—by no peculiar quality distinguishable, yet thrilling and intense! How doubly potent falls thy witching influence on him whose spirit passion has attuned to all the harmonies of earth, and made but too susceptible! Disturbed as I was by the anticipation of my joy, and by the consequent unrest, with the first sight of day, and all its charms, came *peace*—actual and profound. The agitation of my soul was overwhelmed by the prevailing stillness, and I grew tranquil and subdued. Love existed yet—what could extinguish that?—but heightened and sublimed. It was as though, in contemplating the palpable and lovely work of heaven, all selfishness had at once departed from my breast—all dross had separated from my best affections, and left them pure and free. And so I walked on, happiest of the happy, from field to field, from hill to hill, with no companion on the way, no traveller within my view—alone with nature and my heart's delight. "And men pent up in cities," thought I, as I went along, "would call this—*Solitude.*" I remembered how lonely I had felt in the busy crowds of London—how chill, how desolate, and forlorn, and marvelled at the reasoning of man. And came no other thoughts of London, and the weary hours passed there, as I proceeded on my delightful walk? Yes, many, as Heaven knows, who heard the involuntary matin prayer, offered in gratefulness of heart, upon my knees, and in the open fields, where no eye but one could look upon the worshipper, and call the fitness of the time and place in question. The early mowers were soon a-foot; they saluted me and passed. Then, from the humblest cottages issued the straight and thin column of white smoke—white as the snowy cloud—telling of industry within, and the return of toil. Now labourers were busy in their garden plots, labouring for pleasure and delight, ere they strove abroad for hire, their children at their side, giving the utmost of their small help—young, ruddy, wild, and earnest workmen all! The country day is up some hours before the day in town. Life sleeps in cities, whilst it moves in active usefulness away from them. The hills were dotted with the forms of men before I reached the parsonage, and when I reached it, a golden lustre from the mounting sun lit up the lovely house with fire—streaming through the casements, already opened to the sweet and balmy air.

If I had found it difficult to rest on this eventful morning, so also had another—even here—in this most peaceful mansion. The parsonage gate was at this early hour unclosed. I entered. Upon the borders of the velvet lawn, bathed in the dews of night, I beheld the gentle lady of the place; she was alone, and walking pensively—now stooping, not to pluck, but to admire, and then to leave amongst its mates some crimson beauty of the earth—now looking to the mountains of rich gold piled in the heavens, one upon another, changing in form and colour, blending and separating, as is their wondrous power and custom, filling the maiden's soul with joy. Her back was towards me; should I advance, or now retire? Vain question, when, ere an answer could be given, I was already at the lady's side. Shall I tell of her virgin bashfulness, her blushes, her trembling consciousness of pure affection? Shall I say how little her tongue could speak her love, and how eloquently the dropping tear told

all? Shall I describe our morning's walk, her downward gaze—my pride!—her deep, deep silence, my impassioned tones, the insensibility to all external things—the rushing on of envious Time, jealous of the perfect happiness of man? The heart is wanting for the task—the pen is shaking in the tremulous hand. Beautiful vision! long associate of my rest, sweetener of the daily cares of life, shade of the heavenly one—beloved Ellen! hover still around me, and sustain my aching soul—carry me back to the earliest days of our young love, quicken every movement with enthusiasm—be my fond companion once again, and light up the old man's latest hour with the fire that ceased to burn when thou fled'st heavenward! Thou hast been near me often since we parted here! Whose smile but thine has cheered the labouring pilgrim through the lagging day? In tribulation, whose voice has whispered *peace*—whose eye hath shone upon him, like a star, tranquil and steady in the gloomy night? Linger yet, and strengthen and hallow the feeble words that chronicle our love!

It would be impossible to conceive a woman more eminently fitted to fulfil the duties of her station, than the gentle creature whose heart it had been my happiness and fortune to make my own. Who could speak so well of the *daughter's* obedience as he who was the object of her hourly solicitude? Who could behold her tenderness, her watchfulness and care, and not revere the filial piety that sanctified the maid? The poor, most difficult of mankind to please, the easily offended, the jealous and the peevish, were unanimous in their loud praise of her, whose presence filled the foulest hut with light, and was the harbinger of good. It is well to doubt the indigent when they speak *evil* of their fellows; but trust them when, with one voice, *they pray for blessings*, as they did for her, who came amongst them as a sister and a child. If a spotless mind be a treasure in the *wife*, if simplicity and truth, virtue and steadfast love, are to be prized in her who plights her troth to man, what had I more to ask—what had kind nature more to grant?

Had all my previous sufferings been multiplied a hundred times, I should have been indemnified in the month that followed my restoration to the parsonage. Evening after evening, when the business of the day was closed, did we together wander amongst the scenes that were so dear to us—too happy in the enjoyment of the present, dwelling with pleasure on the past, dreaming wildly—as the young must dream—of the uncreated future. I spoke of earthly happiness, and believed it not a fable. What could be brighter than our promises? What looked more real—less likely to be broken? How sweet was our existence! My tongue would never cease to paint in dazzling colours the days that yet awaited us. I numbered over the joys of a domestic life, told her of the divine favour that accompanies contentment, and how angels of heaven hover over the house in which it dwells united to true love. Nor was there wanting extravagant and fanciful discourse, such as may be spoken by the prodigal heart to its co-mate, when none are by to smile and wonder at blind feeling.

"Dear Ellen," have I said, in all the fulness of my passion—"what a life is this we lead! what heavenly joy! To be for ever only as we are, were to have more of God's kindness and beloved care than most of earthly creatures may. Indissolubly joined, and in each other's light to live, and in each other's sight alone to seek those blessings wedded feelings may bestow—to perceive and know ourselves as one—to breathe as one the ripe delicious air—to fix on every object of our mutual love the stamp and essence of one living heart—to walk abroad, and find glad sympathy in all created things—this, this is to be conscious of more lasting joy—to have more comfort in the sight of God, than they did know, the happy

parent pair, when heaven smiled on earth, and earth was heaven, connected both by tenderest links of love."

She did not answer, when my soul ran riot in its bliss. She listened, and she sighed, as though experience cut off the promises of hope, or as if intimations of evil began already to cast their shadows, and to press upon her soul!

Time flew as in a dream. The sunny days passed on, finding and leaving me without a trouble or a fear—happy and entranced. Each hour discovered new charms in my betrothed, and every day unveiled a latent grace. How had I merited my great good fortune? How could I render myself worthy of her love? It was not long before the object of my thoughts, sleeping and waking, became a living idol, and I, a reckless worshipper.

Doctor Mayhew had been a faithful friend, and such he continued, looking to the interests of the friendless, which might have suffered in the absence of so good an advocate. It was he, as I learned, who had drawn from the incumbent his reluctant consent to my return. My departure following my thoughtless declaration so quickly, was not without visible effect on her who had such deep concern in it. Her trouble was not lost upon the experienced doctor; he mentioned his suspicion to her father, and recommended my recall. The latter would not listen to his counsel, and pronounced his *diagnosis* hasty and incorrect. The physician bade him wait. The patient did not rally, and her melancholy increased. The doctor once more interceded, but not successfully. Mr. Fairman received his counsel with a hasty word, and Dr. Mayhew left the parsonage in anger, telling the minister he would himself be answerable no longer for her safety. A week elapsed, and Dr. Mayhew found it impossible to keep away. The old friends met, more attached than ever for the parting which both had found it difficult to bear. The lady was no better. They held a conference—it ended in my favour. I had been exactly a month reinstated, when Dr. Mayhew, who could not rest thoroughly easy until our marriage was concluded, and, as he said, "the affair was off his hands," took a convenient opportunity to intimate to Mr. Fairman the many advantages of an early union. The minister was anxious to postpone the ceremony to a distant period, which he had not courage himself to name. This Mayhew saw, and was well satisfied that, if my happiness depended on the word of the incumbent, I should wait long before I heard it voluntarily given. He told me so, and undertook to bring the matter "to a head" with all convenient speed. He met with a hundred objections, for all of which he was prepared. He heard his friend attentively, and with great deference, and then he answered. What his answers were, I cannot tell—powerful his reasoning must have been, since it argued the jealous parent into the necessity of arranging for an early marriage, and communicating with me that same day upon the views which he had for our future maintenance and comfort.

Nothing could exceed the gratification of Dr. Mayhew, that best and most successful of ambassadors, when he ran to me—straight from the incumbent's study—to announce the perfect success of his diplomacy. Had he been negotiating for himself, he could not have been in higher spirits. Ellen was with me when he acquainted me, that in three months the treasure would be my own, and mine would be the privilege and right to cherish it. He insisted that he should be rewarded on the instant with a kiss; and, in the exuberance of his feelings, was immodest enough to add, that "if he wasn't godfather to the first, and if we did not call him Jacob after him, he'd give us over to our ingratitude, and not have another syllable to say to us."

It was a curious occupation to contemplate the parent during the weeks that followed—to observe all-powerful nature working in him, the chastened and the upright minister of heaven, as she operates upon the weakest and the humblest of mankind. He lived for the happiness and prosperity of his child. For that he was prepared to make every sacrifice a father might—even the greatest—that of parting with her. Was it to be expected that he should be insensible to the heavy cost? Could it be supposed that he would all at once resign the dear one without a quiver or a pang? There is a tremor of the soul as well as of the body, when the knife is falling on the limb to sever it, and this he suffered, struggling for composure as a martyr, and yet with all the weakness of a man. I have watched him closely, and I have known his heart wringing with pain, as the eye of his child sparkled with joy at my approach, whilst the visible features of his face strove fiercely to suppress the rising selfishness. He has gazed upon her, as we have sat together in the cheerful night, wondering, as it seemed, by what fascination the natural and deep-rooted love of years could be surpassed and superseded by the immature affection of a day—forgetful of her mother's love, that once preferred him to her sire. In our evening walks I have seen him in our track, following from afar, eager to overtake and join us, and yet resisting the strong impulse, and forbearing. He could not hide from me the glaring fact, that he was envious of my fortune, manifest as it was in every trifling act; nor was it, in truth, easier for him to conceal the strong determination which he had formed to act with honour and with justice. No angry or reproachful word escaped his lips; every favour that he could show me he gladly proffered; nay, many uncalled-for and unexpected, he insisted upon my receiving, apparently, or, as I guessed, because he wished to mortify his own poor heart, and to remove from me the smallest cause for murmuring or complaint. I endeavoured not to be unworthy of his liberality and confidence; and the daughter, who perceived the conflict in his breast, redoubled her attention, and made more evident her unimpaired and child-like love.

It wanted but a month to the time fixed for our union, when Ellen reached her twentieth year. On that occasion, Dr. Mayhew dined with us, and passed the evening at the parsonage. He was in high spirits; and the minister himself more gay than I had known him since our engagement. Ellen reflected her father's cheerfulness, and was busy in sustaining it. All went merry as a marriage-bell. Ellen sang her father's favourite airs—played the tunes that pleased him best, and acquired new energy and power as she proceeded. The parent looked upon her with just pride, and took occasion, when the music was at its loudest, to turn to Mayhew, and to speak of her.

"How well she looks!" said he, "how beautiful she grows!"

"Yes," answered the physician, "I don't wonder that she made young Stukely's heart ache. What a figure the puss has got!"

"And her health seems quite restored!"

"Well, you are not surprised at that, I reckon. Rest assured, my friend, if we could only let young ladies have their way, our patients would diminish rapidly. Why, how she sings to-night! I never know her voice so good—did you?"

"Oh, she is happy, Mayhew; all her thoughts are joyful! Her heart is revelling. It was very sinful to be so anxious on her account."

"So I always told you; but you wouldn't mind me. She'll make old bones."

"You think so, do you?"

"Why, look at her yourself, and say whether we should be justified in thinking otherwise. Is she not the picture of health and animation?"

"Yes, Mayhew, but her mother——"

"There, be quiet will you? The song is over."

Ellen returned to her father's side, sat upon a stool before him, and placed her arms upon his knee. The incumbent drew her head there, and touched her cheek in playfulness.

"Come, my friend," exclaimed the physician, "that isn't allowable by any means. Recollect two young gentlemen are present, and we can't be tantalized."

The minister smiled, and Ellen looked at me.

"Do you remember, doctor," enquired the latter, "this very day eleven years, when you came over on the grey pony, that walked into this room after you, and frightened us all so?"

"Yes, puss, I do very well; and don't I recollect your tying my wig to the chair, and then calling me to the window, to see how I should look when I had left it behind me, you naughty little girl!"

"That was very wrong, sir; but you know you forgave me for it."

"No, I didn't. Come here, though, and I will now."

She left her stool, and ran laughing to him. The doctor professed to whisper in her ear, but kissed her cheek. He coughed and hemmed, and, with a serious air, asked me what I meant by grinning at him.

"Do you know, doctor," continued Ellen, "that this is my first birthday, since that one, which we have kept without an interruption. Either papa or you have been always called away before half the evening was over."

"Well, and very sorry you would be, I imagine, if both of us were called away *now*. It would be very distressing to you; wouldn't it?"

"It would hardly render her happy, Mayhew," said Mr. Fairman, "to be deprived of her father's society on such an occasion."

"No, indeed, papa," said Ellen, earnestly, "and the good doctor does not think so either."

"Doesn't he, though, you wicked pussy? You would be very wretched, then, if we were obliged to go? No doubt of it, especially if we happened to leave that youngster there behind us."

"Ellen shall read to us, Mayhew," said the incumbent, turning from the subject. "You will find Milton on my table, Caleb."

As he spoke, Ellen imparted to her friend a look of tenderest remonstrance, and the doctor said no more.

The incumbent, himself a fine reader, had taken great pains to teach his child the necessary and simple, but much neglected art of reading well. There was much grace and sweetness in her utterance, correct emphasis, and no effort. An hour passed delightfully with the minister's favourite and beloved author; now the maiden read, now he. He listened with greater pleasure to her voice than to his own or any other, but he watched the smallest diminution of its power—the faintest evidence of failing strength—and released her instantly, most anxious for her health and safety, then and always.

Then arose, as will arise from the contented bosom of domestic piety, grateful rejoicings—the incense of an altar glowing with love's offerings! Past time was summoned up, weighed with the present, and, with all the mercies which accompanied it, was still found wanting in the perfect and unsullied happiness that existed now. "The love of heaven," said the minister, "had never been so manifest and clear. His labours in the service of his people, his prayers on their behalf, were not unanswered

Improvement was taking place around him; even those who had given him cause for deepest sorrow, were already turning from the path of error into that of rectitude and truth. The worst characters in the village had been checked by the example of their fellows, and by the voice of their own conscience, (he might have added, by the working of their minister's most affectionate zeal,) and his heart was joyful—how joyful he could not say—on their account. His family was blessed—(and he looked at Ellen with a moistened eye)—with health, and with the promise of its continuance. His best and oldest friend was at his side; and he, who was dear to them all on her account whose life would soon be linked with his, was about to add to every other blessing, the advantages which must follow the possession of so good a son. What more could he require? How much more was this than the most he could deserve!"

Doctor Mayhew, touched with the solemn feeling of the moment, became a serious man. He took the incumbent by the hand, and spoke.

"Yes, Fairman, we have cause for gratitude. You and I have roughed it many years, and gently enough do we go down the hill. To behold the sufferings of other men, and to congratulate ourselves upon our exemption, is not the rational mode of receiving goodness from Almighty God—yet it is impossible for a human being to look about him, and to see family after family worn down by calamity, whilst he himself is free from any, and not have his heart yearning with thankfulness, knowing, as he must, how little he merits his condition. You and I are happy fellows, both of us: and all we have to do, is to think so, and to prepare quietly to leave our places, whilst the young folks grow up to take them. As for the boy there, if he doesn't smooth your pillow, and lighten for you the weight of old age as it comes on, then am I much mistaken, and ready to regret the steps which I have taken to bring you altogether."

There was little spoken after this. The hearts were full to the brink—to speak was to interfere with their consummate joy. The doctor was the only one who made the attempt, and he, after a very ineffectual endeavour to be jocose, held his peace. The Bible was produced. The servants of the house appeared. A chapter was read from it by the incumbent—a prayer was offered up, and then we separated.

I stole to Ellen as she was about to quit us for the night. "And you, dear Ellen," I whispered in her ear, "are you, too, happy?"

"Yes, *dearest*," she murmured with a gentle pressure, that passed like wildfire to my heart. "I fear *too* happy. Earth will not suffer it."

We parted, and in twelve hours those words were not without their meaning.

We met on the following morning at the usual breakfast hour. The moment that I entered the apartment, I perceived that Ellen was indisposed—that something had occurred, since the preceding night, to give her anxiety or pain. Her hand trembled slightly, and a degree of perturbation was apparent in her movements. My first impression was, that she had received ill news, for there was nothing in her appearance to indicate the existence of bodily suffering. It soon occurred to me, however, that the unwonted recent excitement might account for all her symptoms—that they were, in fact, the natural consequence of that sudden abundance of joyous spirits which I had remarked in her during the early part of the evening. I satisfied myself with this belief, or strove to do so—the more easily, perhaps, because I saw her father indifferent to her state, if not altogether ignorant of it. He who was ever lying in wait—ever watching—ever ready to apprehend the smallest evidence of ill health, was, on this morning, as insensible to the alteration which had taken place in the

darling object of his solicitude, as though he had no eyes to see, or object to behold; so easy is it for a too anxious diligence in a pursuit to overshoot and miss the point at which it aims. Could he, as we sat, have guessed the cause of all her grief—could some dark spirit, gloating on man's misery, have breathed one fearful word into his ear, bringing to life and light the melancholy tale of distant years—how would his nature have supported the announcement—how borne the?——but let me not anticipate. I say that I dismissed all thought of serious mischief, by attributing at once all signs of it to the undue excitement of the festive night. As the breakfast proceeded, I believed that her anxiety diminished, and with that passed away my fears.

At the end of the pleasure-garden of the parsonage was a paddock, and immediately beyond this another field, leading to a small valley of great beauty. On one side of "*the Dell*," as it was called, was a summer-house, which the incumbent had erected for the sake of the noble prospect which the elevation commanded. To this retreat Ellen and I had frequently wandered with our books during the progress of our love. Here I had read to her of affection and constancy, consecrated by the immortal poet's song. Here we had passed delightful hours, bestowing on the future the same golden lustre that made so bright the present. In joy, I had called this summer-house "*the Lover's Bower*," and it was pleasing to us both to think that we should visit in our after-days, for many a year, and with increasing love, a spot endeared to us by the fondest recollections. Thither I bent my steps at the close of our repast. It wanted but two days to the time fixed for the resumption of our studies. The boys had returned, and the note of preparation was already sounded. I carried my task to the retreat, and there commenced my labours. An hour fled quickly whilst I was occupied somewhat in Greek, but more in contemplation of the gorgeous scene before me, and in lingering thoughts of her whose form was never absent, but hovered still about the pleasure or the business of the day. The shadow of that form was yet present, when the substance became visible to the bodily eye. Ellen followed me to the "*Lover's Bower*," and there surprised me. She was even paler than before—and the burden of some disquietude was written on her gentle brow; but a smile was on her lips—one of a languid cast—and also of encouragement and hope. I drew her to my side. Lovers are egotists; their words point ever to themselves. She spoke of the birthday that had just gone by; the tranquil and blissful celebration of it. My expectant soul was already dreaming of the next that was to come, and speaking of the increased happiness that must accompany it.

Ellen sighed.

"It is a lover's sigh!" thought I, not heeding it.

"Whatever may be the future, Caleb," said Ellen seriously, but very calmly, "we ought to be prepared for it. Earth is not our *resting-place*. We should never forget that. Should we, dearest?"

"No, love; but earth has happiness of her kind, of which her children are most sensible. Whilst we are here, we live upon her promises."

"But oh, not to the exclusion of the brighter promises that come from Heaven! You do not say that, dear Caleb?"

"No, Ellen. You could not give your heart to him who thought so; howbeit, you have bestowed it upon one unworthy of your piety and excellence."

"Do not mock me, Caleb," said Ellen blushing. "I have the heart of a sinner that needs all the mercy of Heaven for its weaknesses and faults I have ever fallen short of my duty."

"You are the only one who says it. Your father will not say so, and I question if the villagers would take your part in this respect."

"Do not misunderstand me, Caleb. I am not, I trust, a hypocrite. I have endeavoured to be useful to the poor and helpless in our neighbourhood—I have been anxious to lighten the heaviness of a parent's days, and, as far as I could, to indemnify him for my mother's loss. I believe that I have done the utmost my imperfect abilities permitted. I have nothing to charge myself with on these accounts. But my heavenly Father," continued the maiden, her cheeks flushing, her eyes filling with tears—"oh! I have been backward in my affection and duty to him. I have not ever had before my eyes his honour and glory in my daily walk—I have not done every act in subordination to his will, for his sake, and with a view to his blessing. But he is merciful as well as just, and if his punishment falls now upon my head, it is assuredly to wean me from my error, and to bring me to himself."

The maid covered her moistened cheek, and sobbed loudly. I was fully convinced that she was suffering from the reaction consequent upon extreme joy. I was rather relieved than distressed by her burst of feeling, and I did not attempt for a time to check her tears.

"Tell me, dear Caleb," she said herself at length, "if I were to lose you—if it were to please Heaven to take you suddenly from this earth, would it not be sinful to murmur at his act? Would it not be my duty to bend to his decree, and to prepare to follow you?"

"You would submit to such a trial as a Christian woman ought. I am sure you would, dear Ellen—parted, as we should be, but for a season, and sure of a reunion."

"And would you do this?" enquired the maiden quickly. "Oh, say that you would, dear Caleb! Let me hear it."

"You are agitated, dearest. We will not talk of this now. There is grace in heaven appointed for the bitterest seasons of adversity. It does not fail when needed. Let us pray that the hour may be distant which shall bring home to either so great a test of resignation."

"Yes, pray, dear Stukely; but should it come suddenly and quickly—oh, let us be prepared to meet it."

"We will endeavour, then; and now to a more cheerful theme. Do we go to Dr. Mayhew's, as proposed? We shall spend a happy day with our facetious, but most kind-hearted friend."

Ellen burst again into a flood of tears.

"What is the matter, love?" I exclaimed. "Confide in me, and tell the grief that preys upon your mind."

"Do not be alarmed, Stukely," she answered rapidly; "it may be nothing after all; but when I woke this morning—it may, I hope for your sake that it *is* nothing serious—but my dear mother, it was the commencement of her own last fatal illness."

She stopped suddenly, as if her speech had failed her—coughed sharply, and raised her handkerchief to her mouth. I perceived a thick, broad spot of BLOOD, and shuddered.

"Do not be frightened, Stukely," she continued, shocked fearfully herself. "I shall recover soon. It is the suddenness—I was unprepared. So it was when I awoke this morning—and it startled me, because I heard it was the first bad symptom that my poor mother showed. Now, I pray you, Stukely, to be calm. Perhaps I shall get well; but if I do not, I shall be so happy,—preparing for eternity, with you, dear Caleb, at my side. You promised to be tranquil, and to bear up against this day; and I am sure you will—yes, for my sake—that I may see you so, and have no sorrow."

I took the dear one to my bosom, and, like a child, cried upon her neck. What could I say? In one moment I was a bankrupt and a beggar—my fortunes were scattered to the winds—my solid edifice was stricken by the thunderbolt, and lay in ruins before me! Was it real?

Ellen grew calmer as she looked at me, and spoke.

"Listen to me, dearest Stukely. It was my duty to acquaint you with this circumstance, and I have done so, relying on your manliness and love. You have already guessed what I am about to add. My poor father"—her lips quivered as she said the word—"he must know nothing for the present. It would be cruel unnecessarily to alarm him. His heart would break. He MUST be kept in ignorance of this. You shall see Mayhew; he will, I trust, remove our fears. Should he confirm them, he can communicate to papa." Again she paused, and her tears trickled to her lips, which moved convulsively.

"Do not speak, my beloved," I exclaimed. "Compose yourself. We will return home. Be it as you wish. I will see Mayhew immediately, and bring him with me to the parsonage. Seek rest—avoid exertion."

I know not what conversation followed this. I know not how we reached our home again. I have no recollection of it. Three times upon our road was the cough repeated, and, as at first, it was accompanied by that hideous sight. In vain she turned her head away to escape detection. It was impossible to deceive my keen and piercing gaze. I grew pale as death as I beheld on each occasion the frightful evidence of disease; but the maiden pressed my hand, and smiled sweetly and encouragingly to drive away my fears. She did not speak—I had forbidden her to do so; but her looks—full of tenderness and love—told how all her thoughts were for her lover—all her anxiety and care.

At my request, as soon as we arrived at home, she went to bed. I saw the incumbent—acquainted him with her sudden illness—taking care to keep its nature secret—and then ran for my life to Dr. Mayhew's residence. The very appearance of blood was to me, as it is always to the common and uninformed observer, beyond all doubt confirmatory of the worst suspicions—the harbinger of certain death. There is something horrible in its sight, presented in such a form; but not for itself do we shrink as we behold it—not for what it is, but for what it awfully proclaims. I was frantic and breathless when I approached the doctor's house, and half stupified when I at length stood before him.

I told my errand quickly.

The doctor attempted instantly to mislead me, but he failed in his design. I saw, in spite of the forced smile that would not rest upon his lips, how unexpectedly and powerfully this news had come upon him—how seriously he viewed it. He could not remove my miserable convictions by his own abortive efforts at cheerfulness and unconcern. He moved to his window, and strove to whistle, and to speak of the haymakers who were busy in the fields, and of the weather; but the more he feigned to regard my information as undeserving of alarm, the more convinced I grew that deadly mischief had taken place. There was an air about him that showed him ill at ease; and in the midst of all his quietude and indifference, he betrayed an anxiety to appear composed, unwarranted by an ordinary event. Had the illness been trifling, indeed, he could have afforded to be more serious and heedful.

"I will be at the parsonage some time to-day. You can return without me, Stukely."

"Dr. Mayhew," I exclaimed, "I entreat, I implore you not to trifle with me! I can bear anything but that. Tell me the worst, and I will not

shrink from it. You must not think to deceive me. You are satisfied that there is no hope for us; I am sure you are, and you will not be just and say so."

"I am satisfied of no such thing," answered the doctor quickly. "I should be a fool, a madman, to speak so rashly. There is every reason to hope, I do believe, at present. Tell me one thing—does her father know of it?"

"He does not."

"Then let it still be kept a secret from him. Her very life may depend upon his ignorance. She must be kept perfectly composed—no agitation—no frightened faces around her. But I will go with you, and see what can be done. I'll warrant it is nothing at all, and that puss is well over her fright before we get to her."

Again the doctor smiled unhealthfully, and tried, awkwardly enough, to appear wholly free from apprehension, whilst he was most uncomfortable with the amount of it.

The physician remained for half an hour with his patient, and rejoined me in the garden, when he quitted her. He looked serious and thoughtful.

"There is no hope then?" I exclaimed immediately.

"Tush, boy!" he answered; "quiet—quiet. She will do well, I hope—eventually. She has fever on her now, which must be brought down. While that remains there will be anxiety, as there must be always—when it leaves her, I trust she will be well again. Do you know if she has undergone any unusual physical exertion?"

"I do not."

"I confess to you that I do not like this accident; but it is impossible to speak positively now. Whilst the fever lasts, symptoms may be confounded and mistaken. I will watch her closely."

"Have you seen her father?"

"I have; but I have told him nothing further than he knew. He believes her slightly indisposed. I have calmed him, and have told him not to have the child disturbed. You will see to that?"

"I will."

And now mark me, Stukely. I expect that you will behave like a man, and as you ought. We cannot keep Fairman ignorant of this business. Should it go on, as it may—in spite of everything we can do—he must know it. You have seen sufficient of his character to judge how he will receive the information which it may be my painful lot to take to him. I think of it with dread. It has been my pleasure to stand your friend—you must prove mine. I shall expect you to act with fortitude and calmness, and not, by weakness and self-indulgence, to increase the pain that will afflict the parent's heart; for it will be sufficient for Fairman to know only what has happened, to give up every hope and consolation. You must be firm on his account, and chiefly for the sake of the dear girl, who should not see your face without a smile of confidence and love upon it. Do you hear me? I will let you weep now," he continued, noticing the tears which prevented my reply, "provided that you dry your eyes, and keep them so from this time forward. Do you hear me?"

"Yes," I faltered.

"And will you heed me?"

"I will try," I answered, as firmly as I might, with every hope within me crushed and killed by the words which he had spoken.

"Very well. Then let us say no more, until we see what Providence is doing for us."

The fever of Ellen did not abate that day. The doctor did not leave the house, but remained with the incumbent—not, as he told his friend, because he thought it necessary so to do, but to keep the word which he had given the night before—viz. to pass the day with him. He was sorry that he had been deprived of their company at his own abode, but he could make himself quite comfortable where he was. About eleven o'clock at night, the doctor thought it strange that Robin had not brought his pony over, and wondered what had happened.

"Shall we send to enquire?" asked Mr. Fairman.

"Oh no!" was the quick answer, "that never can be worth while. We'll wait a little longer."

At twelve the doctor spoke again. "Well, he must think of moving; but he was very tired, and did not care to walk."

"Why not stay here, then? I cannot see, Mayhew, why you should be so uneasy at the thought of sleeping out. Come, take your bed with us for once."

"Eh?—well—it's very late—suppose I do."

Mayhew had not been shrewd enough, and, with his ready acquiescence, the minister learned all.

I did not go to bed. My place was at her door, and there I lingered till the morning. The physician paid his last visit shortly after midnight, and had given orders to the nurse who waited on the patient, to call him up if necessary, but on no account to disturb the lady if she slept or was composed. The gentle sufferer did not require his services, or, if she did, was too thoughtful and too kind to make it known. Early in the morning Doctor Mayhew came—the fever had increased—and she had experienced a new attack of hæmoptysis the moment she awoke. The doctor stepped softly from her room, and deep anxiety was written on his brow. I followed him with eagerness. He put his finger to his lips, and said—"Remember, Stukely!"

"Yes, I will—I do; but is she better?"

"No—but I am not discouraged yet. Everything depends upon extreme tranquillity. No one must see her. Dear me—dear me! what is to be said to Fairman, should he ask?"

"Is she placid!" I enquired.

"She is an angel, Stukely," said the good doctor, pressing my hands, and passing on. When we met at breakfast, the incumbent looked hard at me, and seemed to gather something from my pale and careworn face. When Mayhew came, full of bustle, assumed, and badly too, as the shallowest observer could perceive, he turned to him, and in a quiet voice asked—"If his child was much worse since the previous night?"

"Not much," said Mayhew. "She will be better in a short time, I trust."

"May I see her?" enquired the father in the same soft tone.

"Not now—by-and-bye, perhaps: I hope to-morrow. This is a sudden attack, you see—any excitement may prolong it: it wouldn't be well to give a chance away. Don't you see that, Fairman?"

"Yes," said the minister, and from that moment made no further mention of his daughter during breakfast. The meal was soon dispatched. Mr. Fairman retired to his study—and the doctor prepared for his departure. He promised to return in the afternoon.

"Thank God!" he exclaimed as he took leave of me at the gate, "that Fairman remains so very unsuspicious. This is not like him. I expected to find him more inquisitive."

"I am surprised," I answered; "but it is most desirable that he should continue so."

"Yes—yes—by all means—for the present at all events."

Throughout the day there was no improvement in the patient's symptoms. The physician came according to his promise, and again at night. He slept at the parsonage for the second time. The minister betrayed no wonder at this unusual act, showed no agitation, made no importunate enquiries. He asked frequently during the day if any amendment had taken place; but always in a gentle voice, and without any other reference to her illness. As often as the doctor came, he repeated his wish to visit his dear child; but receiving for answer, "that he had better not at present," he retired to his study with a tremulous sigh, but offering no remonstrance.'

The doctor went early to rest. He had no inclination to spend the evening with his friend, whom he hardly cared to see until he could meet him as the messenger of good tidings. I had resolved to hover, as I did before, near the mournful chamber in which she lay; and there I kept a weary watch until my eyes refused to serve me longer, and I was forced against my will, and for the sake of others, to yield my place and crawl to my repose. As I walked stealthily through the house, and on tiptoe, fearful of disturbing one beloved inmate even by a breath—I passed the incumbent's study. The door was open, and a glare of light broke from it, and stretched across the passage. I hesitated for a moment—then listened, but hearing nothing, pursued my way. It was very strange. The clock had just before struck three, and the minister, it was supposed, had been in bed since midnight. "His lamp is burning," thought I—"he has forgotten it. I was on the point of entering the apartment—when I was deterred and startled by his voice. My hand was already on the door, and I looked in. Before me, on his knees, with his back towards me, was my revered friend—his hands clasped, and his head raised in supplication. He was in his dress of the day, and had evidently not yet visited his pillow. I waited, and he spoke—

"Not my will," he exclaimed in a piercing tone of prayer—"not mine, but thy kind will be done, O Lord! If it be possible, let the bitter cup pass from me; but spare not, if thy glory must needs be vindicated. Bring me to thy feet in meek, and humble, and believing confidence—all is well, then, for time and for eternity. It is merciful and good to remove the idol that stands between our love and God. Father of mercy, enable me to bring the truth *home, home* to this most traitorous, this lukewarm, earthy heart of mine—a heart not worthy of thy care and help. Let me not murmur at thy gracious will—oh! rather bend and bow to it—and kiss the rod that punishes. I need chastisement; for I have loved too well—too fondly. I am a rebel, and thy all-searching eye hath found me faithless in thy service. Take her, Father and Saviour. I will resign her—I will bless the hand that smites me—I will"——he stopped; and big tears, such as drop fearfully from manhood's eye, made known to Heaven the agony that tears a parent's heart, whilst piety is occupied in healing it.

It is not my purpose to recite the doubts and fears, the terrible suspense, the anxious hopes, that filled the hours which passed whilst the condition of the patient remained critical. It is a recital which the reader may well spare, and I avoid most gladly. At the end of a week, the fever departed from the sufferer. The alarming symptoms disappeared, and confidence flowed rapidly to the soul again. At this time the father paid his first

visit to his child. He found her weak and wasted; the violent applications which had been necessary for her safety had robbed her of all strength—had effected, in fact, a prostration of power, which she never recovered, from which she never rallied. Mr. Fairman was greatly shocked, and asked the physician for his opinion *now*. The latter declined giving it until, as he expressed himself, "the effects of the fever, and her attack, had left him a fair and open field for observation. There was a slight cough upon her. It was impossible for the present to say whether it was temporary and dependent upon what had happened, or whether it resulted from actual mischief in her lung."

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A month has passed away since the physician spoke these words, and to doubt longer would be to gaze upon the sun and to question its brightness. Mayhew has told the father his worst fears, and bids him prepare like a Christian and a man for the loss of his earthly treasure. It was he who watched the decay of her mother. The case is a similar one. He has no consolation to offer. It must be sought at the throne of Him who giveth, and hath the right to take away. The minister receives the intelligence with admirable fortitude. We are sitting together, and the doctor has just spoken as becomes him, seriously and well. There is a spasm on the cheek of the incumbent, whilst I sob loudly. The latter takes me by the hand, and speaks to the physician in a low and hesitating tone.

"Mayhew," said he, "I thank you for this sincerity. I will endeavour to look the terror in the face, as I have struggled to do for many days. It is hard—but through the mercy of Christ it is not impracticable. Dear and oldest friend, unite your prayers with mine, for strength, and holiness, and resignation. Cloud and agitation are at our feet. Heaven is above us. Let us look there, and all is well."

We knelt. The minister prayed. He did not ask his Master to suspend his judgments. He implored him to prepare the soul of the afflicted one for its early flight, and to subdue the hearts of them all with his grace and holy spirit. Let him who doubts the efficacy of *prayer* seek to clear his difficulty in the season of affliction, or when death sits grimly at the hearth—he shall be satisfied.

If it were a consolation and a joy in the midst of our tribulation to behold the father chastened by the heavy blow which had fallen so suddenly upon his age, how shall I express the ineffable delight—yes, delight, amidst sorrow the most severe—with which I contemplated the beloved maiden, upon whose tender years Providence had allowed to fall so great a trial. Fully sensible of her position, and of the near approach of death, she was, so long as she could see her parent and her lover without distress, patient, cheerful, and rejoicing. Yes, weaker and weaker as she grew, happier and happier she became in the consciousness of her pure soul's increase. Into her ear had been whispered, and before her eyes holy spirits had appeared with the mysterious communication, which, hidden as it is from us, we find animating and sustaining feeble nature, which else would sink, appalled and overwhelmed. There was not one of us who did not live a witness to the truth of the heavenly promise, "*as thy days, so shall thy strength be;*" not one amongst the dearest friends of the sufferer, who did not feel, in the height of his affliction, that God would not cast upon his creatures a burden which a Christian might not bear. But to *her* especially came the celestial declaration with power and might. An angel, sojourning for a day upon the earth, and preparing for his homeward flight, could not have spread his ready wing more joyfully, with livelier anticipa-

tion of his native bliss, than did the maiden look for her recall and blessed ascension to the skies. In her presence I had seldom any grief; it was swallowed up and lost in gratitude for the victory which the dear one had achieved, in virtue of her faith, over all the horrors of her situation. It was when alone that I saw, in its reality and naked wretchedness, the visitation that I, more than any other, was doomed to suffer. For days I could scarcely bring myself to the calm consideration of it. It seemed unreal, impossible, a dream—anything but what it was—the direst of worldly woes—the most tremendous of human punishments.

I remember vividly a day passed in the chamber of the resigned creature, about two months after the first indication of her illness. Her disease had increased rapidly, and the signs of its ravages were painfully manifest in her sunken eye, her hectic cheek, her hollow voice, her continual cough. Her spirit became more tranquil as her body retreated from the world—her hopes more firm, her belief in the love of her Saviour—his will and power to save her, more clear, and free from all perplexity. I had never beheld so beautiful a sight as the devoted maid presented to my view. I had never supposed it possible to exist; and thus, as I sat at her side, though the thought of death was ever present, it was as of a terror in a milk-white shroud—a monster enveloped and concealed beneath a robe of beauty. I listened to her with enchantment whilst she spoke of the littleness of this world, and the boundless happiness that awaited true believers in the next—of the unutterable mercy of God, in removing us from a scene of trouble whilst our views were cloudless, and our hopes sure and abiding. Yes, charmed by the unruffled air, the angelic look, I could forget even my mortality for a moment, and feel my living soul in deep communion with a superior and brighter spirit. It was when she recalled me to earth by a reminiscence of our first days of love, that the bruised heart was made sensible of pain, and of its lonely widowed lot. Then the tears would not be checked, but rushed passionately forth, and as the clouds shut out and hid the one brief glimpse of heaven, flowed unrestrained.

Her mind was in a sweet composed state during the interview to which I allude. She had pleasure in referring to the days of her childhood, and in speaking of the happiness which she had found amongst her native hills.

"How little, Caleb," she said, "is the mind occupied with the thoughts of death in childhood—with any thoughts of actual lasting evil! We cannot see these things in childhood—we cannot penetrate so deeply, or throw our gaze so far, we are so occupied with the joys that are round about us. Is it not so? Our parents are ever with us. Day succeeds to day—one so like the other—and our home becomes our world. A sorrow comes at length—a parent dies—the first and dearest object in that world; then all is known, and the stability of life becomes suspected."

"The home of many," I replied, "is undisturbed for years."

"Yes, and how sweet a thing is love of home! It is not acquired, I am sure. It is a feeling that has its origin elsewhere. It is born with us; brought from another world to carry us on in this with joy. It attaches to the humblest heart that ever throbbed."

"Dear Ellen!" I exclaimed, "how little has sorrow to do with your affliction!"

"And why, dear Caleb? Have you never found that the difficulties of the broad day melt away beneath the influences of the quiet lovely night? Have you never been perplexed in the bustle and tumult of the day, and

has not truth revealed itself when all was dark and still? This is my night, and in sickness I have seen the eye of God upon me, and heard his words, as I have never seen and heard before!"

It was in this manner that she would talk, not more disturbed, nay, not so much, as when in happier times I have heard her speak of the troubles and anxieties of her poor villagers. No complaint—no mournful accents escaped her lips. If at times the soaring spirit was repressed, dejected, the living—the loved ones whom she must leave behind her—had possession of her thoughts and loaded them with pain. Who would wait upon her father? Who would attend to all his little wants? Who could understand his nature as she had learned it—and who would live to comfort and to cheer his days? These questions she has asked herself, whilst her only answers have been her struggling tears. The days were travelling fast; each one taking from the doomed girl years of life. She dwindled and wasted, and became at length less than a shadow of her former self. Why linger on the narrative? Autumn arrived, and, with the general decay—she died. A few hours before her death she summoned me to her bedside, and acquainted me with her fast approaching dissolution. "It is the day," she said, speaking with difficulty—"I am sure of it. I have watched that branch for many days—look—it is quite bare. Its last yellow leaf has fallen—I shall not survive it." I gazed upon her; her eye was brighter than ever. It sparkled again, and most beautiful she looked. But death was there—and her soul eager to give him all that he could claim!

"You are quite happy, dearest Ellen!" I exclaimed, weeping on her thin emaciated hand.

"Most happy, beloved. Do not grieve—be resigned—be joyful. I have a word to say. Nurse," she continued, calling to her attendant—"the drawing."

The nurse placed in her hand the sketch which she had taken of my favourite scene.

"Do you remember, love?" said she. "Keep it, for Ellen—you loved that spot—oh, so did I!—and you will love it still. There is another sketch, you will find it by-and-bye—afterwards—when I am——It is in my desk. Keep that too, for Ellen, will you? It is the last drawing I have made."

I sat by and bit my lips to crush my grief; but I could not be silent whilst my heart was breaking.

"You should rejoice, dear," continued Ellen solemnly. "We did not expect this separation so very soon; but it is better now than later. Be sure it is merciful and good. Prepare for this hour, Caleb; and when it comes, you will be so calm, so ready to depart. How short is life! Do not waste the precious hours. Read from St. John, dearest—the eleventh chapter. It is all sweetness and consolation."

The sun was dropping slowly into the west, leaving behind him a deep red glow that illuminated the hills, and burnished the windows of the sick-chamber. The wind moaned, and, sweeping the sear leaves at intervals, threatened a tempest. There was a solemn stillness in the parsonage, around whose gate—weeping in silence, without heart to speak, or wish to make their sorrow known—were collected a host of humble creatures—the poorest but sincerest friends of Ellen—the villagers who had been her care. They waited and lingered for the heavy news, which they were told must come to them this day; and prayed secretly—every one of them, old and young—for mercy on the sufferer's soul! And she, whose gentle spirit is about to flit, lies peacefully, and but half-conscious of the sounds that pass to Heaven on her behalf. Her father, Mayhew, and I, kneel

round her bed, and the minister, in supplicating tones, where nature does not interpose, dedicates the virgin to *His* favour whose love she has applied so well. He ceases, for a whisper has escaped her lips. We listen all. "*Oh, this is peace!*" she utters faintly, but most audibly, and the scene is over.

"It is a dream," said the minister, when we parted for the night—I with the vain hope to forget in sleep the circumstances of the day—the father to stray unwittingly into *her* former room, and amongst the hundred objects connected with the happy memory of the departed.

The picture of which my Ellen had spoken I obtained on the following day. It was a drawing of the church and the burial-ground adjoining it. One grave was open. It represented that in which her own mortal remains were deposited, amidst the unavailing lamentations of a mourning village.

In three months the incumbent quitted Devonshire. The scenery had no pleasure for him, associated as it was with all the sorrows of his life. His pupils returned to their homes. He had offered to retain them, and to keep his incumbency for the sake of my advancement; but, whilst I saw that every hour spent in the village brought with it new bitterness and grief, I was not willing to call upon him for so great a sacrifice. Such a step, indeed, was rendered unnecessary through the kind help of Dr. Mayhew, to whom I owe my present situation, which I have held for forty years with pleasure and contentment. Mr. Fairman retired to a distant part of the kingdom, where the condition of the people rendered the presence of an active minister of God a privilege and a blessing. In the service of his Master, in the securing of the happiness of other men, he strove for years to deaden the pain of his own crushed heart. And he succeeded—living to bless the wisdom which had carried him through temptation; and dying, at last, to meet with the reward conferred upon the man *who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seeks for glory, and honour, and immortality*—ETERNAL LIFE.

The employment obtained for me by the kind interest of Dr. Mayhew, which the return of so many summers and winters has found me steadily prosecuting, was in the house of his brother—a gentleman whose name is amongst the first in a profession adorned by a greater number of high-minded, honourable men, than the world generally is willing to allow. Glad to avail myself of comparative repose, an active occupation, and a certain livelihood, I did not hesitate to enter his office in the humble capacity of clerk. I have lived to become the confidential secretary and faithful friend of my respected principal.

As I have progressed noiselessly in the world, and rather as a spectator than an actor on the broad stage of life, it has been no unprofitable task to trace the career of those with whom I formed an intimacy during the bustle and excitement of my boyhood. Not many months after my introduction into the mysteries of law, tidings reached my ears concerning Mr. Clayton—he had left his chapel suddenly. His avarice had led him deeper and deeper into guilt; speculation followed speculation, until he found himself entangled in difficulties, from which, by lawful means, he was unable to extricate himself. He forged the signature of a wealthy member of his congregation, and thus added another knot to the complicated string of his delinquencies. He was discovered. There was not a man aware of the circumstances of the case who was not satisfied of his guilt; but a legal quibble saved him, and he was sent into the world again, branded with the solemn reprimand of the judge who tried him for his life, and who bade him seek existence honestly—compelled to labour,

as he would be, in a humbler sphere of life than that to which he had hitherto employed his undoubted talents. To those acquainted with the working of the "system" of *dissent*, it will not be a matter of surprise that the result was not such as the good judge anticipated. It so happened that, at the time of Mr. Clayton's acquittal, a dispute arose between the minister of his former congregation and certain influential members of the same. The latter, headed by a fruiterer, a very turbulent and conceited personage, separated from what they called the *church*, and set up another *church* in opposition. The meeting-house was built, and the only question that remained to agitate the pious minds of the half-dozen founders was—*how to let the pews!* MR. CLAYTON, more popular amongst his set than ever, was invited to accept the duties of a pastor. He consented, and had the pews been trebled they would not have satisfied one half the applications which, in one month, were showered on the victorious schismatics. Here, for a few years, Mr. Clayton continued; his character improved, his fame more triumphant, his godliness more spiritual and pure than it had been even before he committed the crime of forgery. His ruling passion, notwithstanding, kept firm hold of his soul, and very soon betrayed him into the commission of new offences. He fled from London, and I lost sight of him. At length I discovered that he was preaching in one of the northern counties, and with greater success than ever—yes, such is the fallacy of the system—with the approbation of men, and the idolatry of women, to whom the history of his career was as familiar as their own. Again circumstances compelled him to decamp. I know not what these were, nor could I ever learn; satisfied, however, that from his nature *money* must have been in close connexion with them, I expected soon to hear of him again; and I did hear, but not for years. The information that last of all I gained was, that he had sold his noble faculties *undisguisedly* to the arch enemy of man. He had become the editor of one of the lowest newspapers of the metropolis, notorious for its Radical politics and atheistical blasphemies.

Honest, faithful, and unimpeachable John Thompson! Friend, husband, father—sound in every relation of this life—thou noble-hearted Englishman! Let me not say thy race is yet extinct. No; in spite of the change that has come over the spirit of our land—in spite of the rust that eats into men's souls, eternally racked with thoughts of gain and traffic—in spite of the cursed poison insidiously dropped beneath the cottage eaves, by reckless, needy demagogues, I trust my native land, and still believe, that on her lap she cherishes whole bands of faithful children, and firm patriots. Not amongst the least inducements to return to London was the advantage of a residence near to that of my best friend and truest counsellor. I cannot number the days which I have spent with him and his unequalled family—unequalled in their unanimity and love. For years no Sunday passed which did not find me at their hospitable board; a companion afterwards in their country walks, and at the evening service of their parish church. The children were men and women before it pleased Providence to remove their sire. How like his life was good John Thompson's death! Full of years, but with his mental vision clear as in its dawn, aware of his decline, he called his family about his bed, and to the weeping group spoke firmly and most cheerfully.

"He had lived his time," he said, "and long enough to see his children doing well. There was not one who caused him pain and fear—and that was more than every father of a family could say—thank God for it! He didn't know that he had much to ask of any one of them. If they continued to work hard, he left enough behind to buy them tools; and if they

didn't, the little money he had saved would be of very little use. There was their mother. He needn't tell 'em to be kind to her, because their feelings wouldn't let them do no otherwise. As for advice, he'd give it to them in his own plain way. First and foremost, he hoped *they never would sew their mouths up*—never act in such a way as to make themselves ashamed of speaking like a man;" and then he recommended strongly that *they should touch no bills but such as they might cut wood with.* The worse that could befall 'em would be a cut upon the finger; and if they handled other bills they'd cut their heads off in the end, be sure of it. "Alec," said he at last—"you fetch me a bundle of good sticks. Get them from the workshop." Alec brought them, and the sire continued—"Now, just break one a-piece. There, that's right—now, try and break them altogether. No, no, my boys, you can't do that, nor can the world break you so long as you hold fast and well together, Disagree and separate, and nothing is more easy. If a year goes bad with one, let the others see to make it up. Live united, do your duty, and leave the rest to Heaven." So Thompson spake; such was the legacy he left to those who know from his good precept and example how to profit by it. My friendship with his children has grown and ripened. They are thriving men. Alec has inherited the nature of his father more than any other son. All go smoothly on in life, paying little regard to the broils and contests of external life, but most attentive to the *in-door* business. All, did I say?—I err. Exception must be made in favour of my excellent good friend, Mr. Robert Thompson. He has in him something of the spirit of his mother, and finds fault where his brethren are most docile. Catholic emancipation he regarded with horror—the Reform bill with indignation; and the onward movement of the present day he looks at with the feelings of an individual waiting for an earthquake. He is sure that the world is going round the other way, or is turned topsy-turvy, or is coming to an end. He is the quietest and best-disposed man in his parish—his moral character is without a flaw—his honesty without a blemish; yet is his mind filled with designs which would astonish the strongest head that rebel ever wore. He talks calmly of the propriety of hanging, without trial, all publishers of immorality and sedition—of putting embryo rioters to death, and granting them a judicial examination as soon as possible afterwards. Dissenting meeting-houses he would shut up instanter, and guard with soldiers to prevent irregularity or disobedience. "Things," he says, "are twisted since his father was a boy, and must be twisted back—by force—to their right place again. Ordinary measures are less than useless for extraordinary times, and he only wishes he had power, or was prime minister for a day or two." But for this unfortunate *monomania*, the Queen has not a better subject, London has not a worthier citizen, than the plain-spoken, simple-hearted Robert Thompson.

In one of the most fashionable streets of London, and within a few doors of the residence of royalty, is a stylish house, which always looks as if it were newly painted, furnished, and decorated. The very imperfect knowledge which a passer-by may gain, denotes the existence of great wealth within the clean and shining walls. Nine times out of ten shall you behold standing at the door, a splendid equipage—a britzska or barouche. The appointments are of the richest kind—the servants' livery gaudiest of the gaudy—silvery are their buttons, and silver-gilt the horses' harness. Stay whilst the big door opens, and then mark the owner of the house and the britzska. A distinguished foreigner, you say, of forty or thereabouts. He seems dressed in livery himself; for all the colours of the rainbow are upon him, Gold chains across his breast—how many you cannot count

at once—intersect each other curiously; and on every finger sparkles a precious jewel, or a host of jewels. Thick mustaches and a thicker beard adorn the foreign face; but a certain air which it assumes, convinces you without delay that it is the property of an unmitigated blackguard. Reader, you see the ready Ikey, whom we have met oftener than once in this short history. Would you know more? Be satisfied to learn, that he exists upon the follies and the vices of our high nobility. He has made good the promises of his childhood and his youth. He rolls in riches, and is——a fashionable money-lender.

Dark were the shadows which fell upon my youth. The indulgent reader has not failed to note them—with pain it may be—and yet, I trust, not without improvement. Yes, sad and gloomy has been the picture, and light has gleamed but feebly there. It has been otherwise since I carried, for my comfort and support, the memory of my beloved Ellen into the serious employment of my later years. With the catastrophe of her decease, commenced another era of my existence—the era of self-denial, patience, sobriety, and resignation. Her example dropped with silent power into my soul, and wrought its preservation. Struck to the earth by the immediate blow, and rising slowly from it, I did not mourn her loss as men are wont to grieve at the departure of all they hold most dear. Think when I would of her, in the solemn watches of the night, in the turmoil of the bustling day—a saint beatified, a spirit of purity and love—hovered above me, smiling in its triumphant bliss, and whispering——peace. My lamentation was intercepted by my joy. And so throughout. Have I been irritated by the small annoyances of the world, her radiant countenance—as it looked sweetly even upon death—has risen to shame and silence my complaint. Repining at my humble lot, her words—that estimated well the value, the nothingness of life compared with life eternal—have spoken the effectual reproof. As we advance in years, the old familiar faces gradually retreat, and fade at length entirely. Forty long years have passed, and on this bright spring morning the gentle Ellen steals upon the lawn, unaltered by the lapse of time. Her slender arm is twined in mine, and her eye fills with innocent delight. Not an hour of age is added to her face, although the century was not yet born when last I gazed upon its meek and simple loveliness. She vanishes. Is it her voice that through the window flows, borne on the bosom of the vernal wind? Angel of Light, I wait thy bidding to rejoin thee!

THE END.

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